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Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXVIII, Issue No. 47

www.saipantribune.com | THURSDAY MARCH 8, 2018 | www.facebook.com/saipantribune

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Man in 'ice' lab case had 30-year sentence for murder but was paroled

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The murder conviction of one of four men arrested in connection with the alleged operation of a clandestine methamphetamine lab on Saipan has surfaced.

It was learned at a detention hearing at the U.S. District Court for the NMI last Tuesday that Eugene Blas Repeki was convicted in 2000 of murder in the second degree in connection with the fatal beating of a security guard in Chalan Kanoa in 1999.

In 2001, then-Superior Court associate judge Timothy H. Bellas slapped Repeki with a 30-year prison term. Yet the CNMI Board of Parole

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Fire hits 4.5 acres of vegetation

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A brush fire swept through 4.5 acres of vegetation in Papago yesterday at noon. The National Weather Service out of Tiyan, Guam, expects drought in the CNMI to worsen in the next couple of weeks.

No one was reported injured in the Papago brush fire and no one was treated at the scene for medical complaints, according to Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services spokesman Derek Gersonde yesterday.

» **Drought notice out for CNMI**

Gersonde said the cause of fire is being investigated.

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A fire safety officer walks past 4.5 acres of vegetation in Papago that were destroyed by fire of still unknown cause yesterday. DEREK GERSONDE

Only 15 pct. of SHEFA graduates return home

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Only 15 percent of students who finished college with the help of the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance program have returned to the island after graduating, in blatant violation of SHEFA regulations.

That low return rate of graduates who used SHEFA remains one of the challenges the program faces, said SHEFA board member Raymond Muña, speaking at the Saipan Chamber of Commerce meeting yesterday at the Pacific Islands Club

"There are a lot of factors why they don't return home. You could look at the competitive wages… in the [United S]tates compared to here," he said.

Gloria Cavanagh isn't surprised.

"We must remember we did not

See SHEFA on Page 4

Fraud most common crime vs *man'amko*

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Based on the calls received by the Office on Aging in the past few years, suspicions of financial exploitation, scams, and fraud are the most common forms of elder abuse committed in the Commonwealth.

According to Walter Manglona, Office on Aging director, fraud usually revolves around the misuse of an elderly's personal checks, credit cards, or accounts.

It also involves stealing cash, in-

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Gary Cohn is leaving the White House after breaking with President Donald Trump on trade policy.
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WORLD
A military cargo plane crashes in Syria, killing all 39 Russian servicemen on board.
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FOCUS
North Korean leader Kim Jong Un plays at being a statesman.
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Local

Phan, 2 co-defendants beg for shorter prison terms

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Businessman David Trung Quoc Phan and his two co-defendants have asked the federal court for shorter sentences after being convicted of bringing Bangladeshi men to Saipan on promises of good-paying jobs and green cards in exchange for cash.

Phan and brothers Muksedur Rahman and Rafiqul Islam will be sentenced tomorrow, Friday, at 9am, in the U.S. District Court for the NMI.

Phan, Rahman, and Islam filed Monday and Tuesday their sentencing memorandum and objections to the presentence investigation report prepared by the U.S. Probation Office.

The U.S. Probation Office had recommended a prison sentence of 41 months for Phan. The U.S. Attorney's Office, on the other hand, recommended a prison sentence of 46 months.

Phan, through Steven P. Pixley, said these sentencing recommendations are unnecessarily punitive and does not consider all the factors pertinent to sentencing.

Pixley said slapping the 54-year-old Phan with a lengthy jail term is not appropriate or required.

Pixley said Phan, who was born in Vietnam, has no criminal history, fled Vietnam in 1975 when Saigon fell, has three children, and graduated from Bob Jones University in South Carolina with a degree in Bible Studies.

Phan's brother, businessman Ta Bun Kuy, describes him as a "kind and pious man."

Kuy stated that Phan "is also trusting and this sometimes leads him to trouble."

Pixley said Phan is clearly "really not bad" as even the workers (victims) testified that he has a "big heart," and that they begged him to renew their CW-1 visas and that he was helping them and he renewed their visas.

Defendant Rahman, through counsel Robert T. Torres, maintained that when all the factors for enhancements are appropriately calculated, the low-end sentence of 87 months or the lowest arrived-upon final guidelines range is sufficient and no greater than necessary to achieve the ends of justice with the sentencing statute.

Torres said a sentence of 87 months promotes respect for the law as it sends a message that such persons suffer the consequences of such offenses—a long jail of over senen years, deportation from the U.S. and loss of employment.

Torres described the recommendation of the U.S. Probation to impose 108 months on Rahman as "most extreme" and the U.S. government's recommendation of 135 months as "more draconian."

Rahman first came to the CNMI in 1996 where he worked as a farmer on Tinian for three years, and has been lawfully employed since then.

Rahman moved to Saipan, where he worked as a sanitation worker for six years in a trash and collection and recycling service.

He started training as a welder for Bali Steel and then moved to Tano Group. He last worked for GPPC as a welder for five years.

Torres said while at GPPC, Rahman worked on various projects, mostly recently the Aircraft Rescue Firefighting Facility training structure mock-airplane made out of heavy-gauge metal.

When he lost his work with GPPC after this case started, Rahman could not work legally so he had to support himself and his family with the cattle he raised and ultimately slaughtered and sold.

Rahman has no prior conviction and has no pending criminal charges.

Rafiqul Islam, through counsel Bruce Berline, said a sentence of one year and one day imprisonment is sufficient.

Berline said the record indicates that the 38-year-old Islam played a minor role in the fraudulent scheme at the center of this case.

Berline said now that Islam has been separated from his wife and two young children who have returned to Bangladesh, he realized none of the benefits he expected from a higher-paying job as a welder on Saipan.

He said Islam has suffered from the pressure and stress of the criminal case and from watching his family suffer.

Islam's daughter was born just before the trial began last year and his wife and two children have returned to Bangladesh without him.

Berline said that Islam's financial situation is so bad that, without any work, he is unable to purchase insulin to treat his diabetes.

The lawyer said as a non-citizen, Islam doesn't qualify for any public assistance programs.

Last Oct. 18, a federal jury found Phan guilty of two counts of mail fraud, three counts of fraud in foreign labor contracting, and one count of fraud and misuse of visas and permits.

Phan's co-defendants, Rahman and l Islam, were also convicted.

Phan's fiancée, Analyn Nunez, and Rahman's wife, Shahinur Akter, were acquitted. Another defendant, Zeaur Rahman Dalu, already pleaded guilty.

Demapan scores Sablan suggestion on EITC; speaker mum

By ERWIN ENCINARES
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REPORTER

A member of the House of Representatives who is running against Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) this November for the delegate seat criticized Sablan's suggestion to end the local taxes imposed on earned income tax credit.

Rep. Angel A. Demapan (R-Saipan) said that Sablan's suggestion last Monday came "now that [Sablan] is unable to secure federal funding for the CNMI through Congress."

Sablan did not immediately respond to requests to *Saipan Tribune*'s request for comments.

"[Sablan] is proposing to increase the obligations to the limited resources of the CNMI at a time when the Legislature and the [Torres] administration are making greater efforts to pay down years of accumulated government obligations to land compensation, CUC bills, and retirement benefits," said Demapan.

Sablan had suggested that the CNMI Legislature repeal Public Law 11-25, the law that imposes a 100-percent tax on credit possibly refunded to families eligible for the earned income tax credit or EITC. Sablan sent a letter to both House Speaker Rafael Demapan (R-Saipan) and Senate President Arnold I. Palacios (R-Saipan) suggesting to repeal P.L. 11-25 over the weekend.

Demapan said Sablan's difficulty in passing legislation through Congress even when "the Obama administration supported the bill" is another "example of the CNMI's diminished representation in Congress."

While Palacios told *Saipan Tribune* last Monday that Sablan's suggestion was "worth looking into," Demapan has yet to respond.

"It certainly is something to look at if it is a nexus to increasing employment opportunities and incentivize residents to seek jobs," Palacios had said. He added that it was a "valid proposal" once the financial impact tono the CNMI is measured.

"…The cost of it in the past was what urged the 11th Legislature to act on what is now known as Public Law 11-25," he said. "I'm for it in general. We just got to figure out the impact cost, particularly."

In a press release, Sablan's office noted that the benefit of ending the EITC tax is estimated at $16 million in tax refunds to taxpayers annually.

"With Commonwealth revenues reported to be at an all-time high, now is the time to put more money in the hands of our working families," said Sablan in his previous statement.

UOG to mark 50th Charter Day on March 13

The University of Guam will celebrate its 50th Charter Day on Tuesday, March 13. Opening ceremonies begin at 9am in the center courtyard, and activities run throughout the day until 5pm. The event is open to the public.

The theme is "Green is the New Gold" which recognizes the official color of UOG.

Each year, Charter Day is the largest public event at the university with nearly 5,000 people visiting the campus.

For a list of activities and downloads, visit www.uog.edu/charterday. ***(PR)***

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2 Does not apply to access through Quicken® and Quickbooks®. FHB Online access through Quicken® and Quickbooks® is $9.95 per month. Optional Online Banking Features may incur additional fees. See Terms and Conditions of the FHB Online Services for more details.
3 You must be enrolled in FHB Online and have a mobile device with internet to use FHB Mobile Banking. Device must have a rear-facing camera with autofocus to use Mobile Deposit. See FAQs in the "Mobile Deposit" section of fhb.com/mobile for Mobile Deposit eligibility requirements. Checks deposited via Mobile Deposit are treated as deposits by mail for funds availability purposes. See Terms and Conditions of FHB Online services for full details. Text banking not available in Guam or CNMI.
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Kilili: USDOL enforcement helps stop bad actors

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) issued the following statement yesterday on the U.S. Department of Labor's announcement that it has finalized settlements with four of the Imperial Pacific International casino construction subcontractors for $13.9 million in wages and damages to over 2,400 workers who came to Saipan to work on the project:

"I appreciate the work of the U.S. Department of Labor and all the other federal agencies in investigating and enforcing U.S. labor law violations at the casino resort construction site on Saipan.

"The announcement comprises settlements with four subcontractors that will provide nearly $14 million in owed wages and damages to over 2,400 workers at the construction site. These settlements resolve part of the wide-ranging, continuing investigation of labor law violations at this site.

"The settlements, and previously announced large-scale fines by the Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration for worker safety violations, send a stern message that federal laws are enforced in the Marianas, and employers who try to skirt the law and undercut their workers will be held accountable.

"I applaud [Labor] Secretary [Alexander] Acosta's commitment to preventing visa fraud and abuse and protecting U.S. workers.

"Recent legislation introduced by Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and myself, the Northern Mariana Islands U.S. Workforce Act, contains new rules to better protect all workers, and help weed out the bad actors from legitimate businesses.

"These massive violations of U.S. law, and other allegations associated with casino activities, give the Marianas a black eye and make it increasingly challenging to pass necessary legislation to maintain a sufficient workforce and to maintain our parole policy, which are both essential to sustaining our economy.

"We must all be vigilant—the Commonwealth government, the business community, and workers who know their rights and are willing to come forward—to ensure that laws are followed and workers are treated fairly." ***(PR)***

NMC offices will be closed Friday morning

Northern Marianas College employees will be participating in emergency preparedness training activities on Friday, March 9, from 8am to 1pm. All NMC offices will be closed in the morning to ensure maximum employee participation. Offices will reopen at 1:30pm on the same day.

Classes scheduled for Friday morning will also be canceled. Students whose classes have been canceled are advised to contact their instructors for information about making up class work. Classes scheduled after 1:30pm on Friday, March 9, 2018, will resume as scheduled.

For any campus emergency, contact NMC Security at 237-6800. ***(NMC)***

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MAN

From Page 1

granted Repeki's request for parole in March 2010, according to assistant U.S. attorney Garth Backe.

The Office of the Attorney General had stated in 2001 that, of the three suspects, it was Repeki who delivered the death blow, leading to the death of Cesario B. Valerio, who was employed then as a security guard at Courtney's Plaza, a commercial building in Chalan Kanoa.

At the detention hearing, Backe presented evidence to support the U.S. government's motion for the continued detention of Repeki, Vincent D. Cabrera Jr., Sidney C. Kani, and Rick U. Omar Jr.

It was only Kani, represented by court-appointed counsel Colin Thompson, who did not contest his continued detention.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona granted the U.S. government's motion for the continued detention of Repeki, Cabrera, and Kani.

Manglona said there was a strong showing in regards to the danger that Repeki, Cabrera, and Kani pose to the community.

With respect to Omar, the judge said she was inclined to grant the U.S. government's motion for continued detention.

Manglona, however, said she would give Omar the opportunity of at least considering his proposed third-party custodians.

Manglona continued the detention hearing for Omar to tomorrow, Friday, at 1:30pm, to allow the U.S. Probation Office time to report on the defendant's proposed two third-party custodians—his aunt and girlfriend.

The preliminary hearings for the four will be on Monday, March 12, at 1:30pm.

Cabrera Jr. and Repeki were charged with conspiracy to manufacture methamphetamine. Kani and Omar were charged with conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine.

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agents and CNMI Drug Enforcement Task Force and Customs officers arrested the four and searched the alleged clandestine "ice" laboratory in a hotel room and at a Dandan home last Feb. 25.

FIRE

From Page 1

A caller to DFEMS reported the grass fire in Papago on Wednesday at 12:15pm.

Firefighters from the Susupe Fire Station were able to contain the blaze at 1:37pm and fully extinguished it at 3:10pm.

Gersonde said they used 50 gallons of water for the operation.

Last week, multiple brush fires occurred on Tinian and Rota.

In an advisory yesterday, the NWS Forecast Office said that satellite images show very dry weather over the Marianas and the region remains in short-term moderate drought. This is officially termed Drought Level 1 of 4.

Some showers have fallen recently; however, much drier weather is expected to develop during the next few weeks.

With the expectation of moderate to occasionally strong trade winds over most of Micronesia in the next couple of months, the Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management is advising CNMI residents to refrain from outdoor burning activities so as not to cause wildfires and endanger surrounding life and property.

The Office of HSEM advises to take all necessary precautionary measures at this time; all outdoor burning activity is not recommended and should be delayed.

Gersonde reminded the public that the best way to battle grass fires is to prevent it from ever starting.

He issued the following tips:

■ Do not throw cigarette or cigar butts on the ground or out of a vehicle.

■ Do not burn trash, leaves, or brush outdoors, without proper supervision.

■ Employ the 30-foot "safety zone" surrounding the home.

■ If not using a storage shed to store your firewood, make sure you stack it at least 20 feet away from your house.

■ Rake leaves, cut off dead limbs, and cut grass regularly.

■ Avoid parking cars, trucks, or recreational vehicles on dry grass or brush.

■ Stress to children the importance of not playing with fire.

Visit the following links for the latest advisory information:

■ NWS website: http://www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

■ NWS Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/NWS-Guam/

■ CNMI EOC State Warning Point Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/cnmieocswp/.

SHEFA

From Page 1

have an economy prior to a few years ago. It was difficult to offer competitive wages. … Additionally, as mentioned, many of our recipients become accustomed to the services that are readily available in the mainland versus home," said Cavanagh, who chairs the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands.

She is, however, optimistic that the CNMI economy would continue its upward trajectory and entice more SHEFA graduates to return home and contribute to the local economy.

Chamber president Velma Palacios said she is a bit stunned at the low return rate of SHEFA recipients.

"We as a community should work together to find ways to encourage our SHEFA and CNMI Scholarship recipients to come back to the CNMI and be part of the workforce. We need everyone's talent and expertise," she told *Saipan Tribune*.

Businessman James Arenovski said that having 15 percent of SHEFA graduates returning is still a positive thing.

"Of course it would be nice to see this percentage increase. I think there are a lot of kids who find good work and stay in the [United S]tates. SHEFA is notable and is important to help CNMI students seek a better education. We should understand that many will not return for various reasons," he said.

SHEFA provides financial assistance to qualified residents of Saipan and the Northern Islands who are pursuing postsecondary education.

SHEFA wants half to return

Muña, who chairs SHEFA's Program and Development Committee and himself a SHEFA scholar, said that one of SHEFA's goals is to raise the return rate of SHEFA graduates to 50 percent or higher.

"We want our folks to return home and make this place a better place. We are trying to explore several options to help our students, who for whatever reason, just can't return or have a hard time paying that back," he said.

Under SHEFA rules, scholars would have to return home and work on Saipan the same number of years they took advantage of the program's scholarship. For instance, if a student used SHEFA for all four years of his bachelor's degree, then he would need to work on Saipan for four years as well.

Students who fail to come home and work would have to reimburse SHEFA for the scholarships money they used in earning their education.

Muña said one option SHEFA is looking at is establishing a forgiveness program. He, however, clarified that it's more of a way to defer paying back the scholarship money owed SHEFA.

He said the business community could also help returning SHEFA graduates by offering higher salaries and signing bonuses.

"One way to help or assist is by providing competitive wages. The CNMI government and some private businesses offer competitive wages. The Public School System, for example, has increased the wages of its instructors and is now competitive with the U.S.," said Muña.

On-island job fairs like the ones organized by the Public School System have also worked in the past.

"Quite honestly, personally from my own experience, when you're out in the [United S]tates, you get more comfortable in the surroundings. It's difficult to come back home, despite calling Saipan home. Maybe not now, but in the years past, the opportunities just weren't here," he added.

A perfect example, Muña said, is his own sister. "…she graduated with her degree in business and she came back home and did her thing and went back to the [United S] tates because there were better opportunities for her [there]. The bottom line is, if there are more opportunities here, like now the economy is booming, then I want to say that our people will come back home," he said.

As for as SHEFA getting back the money from SHEFA graduates who didn't return, Muña admitted that forcing them to pay back the obligation is very difficult.

"It's really difficult to track students who go off-island and have an obligation to return. Some may have had a change of address or changed their number," he said.

Muña said reporting them to collection agencies and even attacking their credit score is also difficult and requires extra investment on SHEFA's part.

"It's an ongoing problem that we're trying to solve and we're trying to come up with creative ways to solve it," he said.

Arenovski said that SHEFA should provide more incentives and rewards for those who return to Saipan. He also suggested punitive options for those who don't return home.

"Maybe we should not pay up front and pay a lump sum to the school or lending agent when the graduate returns [and] wiping out a portion of their school debt. We can also have the student's parents 'co-sign' and if the graduate does not return to Saipan, we could collect from them and their assets," he said.

SHEFA provides anywhere from $800 to $9,000 in financial assistance per semester for every student enrolled in vocational, associates, bachelors, or any advanced degrees.

ERRATUM

Office on Aging director Walter Manglona clarified that he is asking for a nearly $1-million budget for fiscal year 2019 and not last fiscal year. He also said that Rota actually has a bus driver, but Tinian does not. Manglona said Office on Aging also has cooks on Rota and Tinian and mayor staff of Tinian and Rota provide assistance through an MOU with the Office on Aging.

FRAUD

From Page 1

come checks, or household goods, forging the elderly's signature and engaging in identity theft.

Scams, meanwhile, are made up of announcements of a "prize" that the elderly person has won, but must pay money to claim, invitations to phony charities, and investment fraud.

Speaking at the weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Saipan at the Hyatt Regency Saipan, Manglona said his office will not tolerate abuse against the *man'amko* and implores the public to report anyone who mistreats the elderly to authorities.

Manglona assured *Saipan Tribune* that his office and other agencies are constantly on the lookout for any elder abuse in the CNMI.

Other types of elderly abuse are physical abuse, emotional and verbal abuse, psychological and non-verbal abuse, and neglect.

Physical abuse is the non-accidental use of force against an elderly person that results in physical pain, injury, or impairment. Such abuse includes not only physical assaults such as hitting or shoving but the inappropriate use of drugs, restraints, or confinement.

Manglona said signs of physical abuse include unexplained burns, cuts, bruises, and bleeding, sprained or broken bones, and injuries that happen over and over.

Another telltale sign of physical abuse is if an elderly doesn't want to see a doctor about his or her wounds.

Emotional or verbal abuse, meanwhile, include intimidation through yelling or threats, humiliation and ridicule, and habitual blaming or scapegoating.

Psychological or non-verbal abuse is ignoring an elderly person, isolating him or her from friends or activities, and terrorizing or menacing an elderly person.

Manglona said neglect is failure to fulfill a caretaking obligation and it constitutes more than half of all reported cases of elder abuse.

"It can be active (intentional) or passive (unintentional, based on factors such as ignorance or denial that an elderly charge needs as much care as he or she does," he said.

Manglona said the Office on Aging encourages people to report elder abuse. He said CNMI Public Law No. 9-21 provides for the protection of the elderly from physical and mental cruelty.

"In support of the program, we continue to bring awareness and report abuse to the Department of Public Safety. The Office on Aging is working with the Administration for Community Living in the implementation of the National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System or NAMRS. This voluntary reporting system will establish, for the first time, a national data resource on the extent and nature of the maltreatment investigated by APS programs," said Manglona.

In addition, the Office on Aging provides respite care and other assistance to caregivers of the elderly.

"Under the stress of constant caregiving, even the most loving family member can lose patience and possibly mistreat a patient. Sometimes family caregivers become so exhausted that they neglect important aspects of the patient's care. The respite care provided by the Office on Aging can help the family caregiver to stay healthy, physically and mentally, and thus provide better care," he said.

Manglona said the community can report elder abuse by contacting the Office on Aging, Department of Public Safety, Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy System, Inc., Micronesian Legal Service Corp., Attorney General's Office, etc.

"There will be consequences if anyone is caught abusing an elderly person. If anyone witnessed or suspects elder abuse, please report it immediately. If you suspect that an elderly is in danger, you must call the police right away. If you are unsure about what constitutes an abuse and need additional information, do not hesitate to call our office for more information. Please help us continue to protect our *man'amko* here in the CNMI," he told *Saipan Tribune.*

The Office on Aging's telephone numbers are 233-1321 and 233-1322 (Saipan), 433-9220 (Tinian), and 532-2656 (Rota).

OPD accuses OAG of turning prelim hearing into sham proceeding

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Office of the Public Defender has accused the Office of the Attorney General of turning a preliminary hearing in a domestic violence case against a woman into a sham proceeding by calling in to testify a police detective who is not the case agent and allegedly does not know anything about the matter.

Assistant public defender Heather M. Zona asked the Superior Court to dismiss the case against her client, Pennie Lee Concepcion Cabrera, saying the government failed to establish probable cause to warrant the filing of the charges.

Cabrera allegedly repeatedly punched her live-in boyfriend in the chest and ran him over with a car during an argument at their home last Feb. 7.

Cabrera, 25, was arrested for assault with a dangerous weapon, assault and battery, disturbing the peace, and reckless driving.

Police said the boyfriend had scratches on his left leg, which the girlfriend allegedly ran over with a car.

The preliminary hearing was held last Feb. 16. At the hearing, assistant attorney general Teri C. Tenorio, counsel for the government, called to the witness stand police detective Wally Emul.

Emul testified that Tenorio told him to read the declaration and testify at the preliminary hearing as to the contents in the declaration.

After Emul's testimony, Tenorio told the court that she had the detective testify, rather than the case agent who might have provided information about the matter.

Tenorio noted that her actions were purposefully made in light of Camacho's decision in another case in which the preliminary hearing was continued, and the judge ordered the prosecutor not to talk to the case agent/testifying witness in that case until the issues to be addressed were resolved by the court.

Tenorio stated she just does not want to impede her investigation.

When asked about OPD calling it a sham proceeding, Tenorio said she is compelled to charge only those cases of which there is evidence that an offense has been committed and the defendant has committed the offense(s).

Furthermore, Tenorio said, all prosecutors must have a reasonable belief they can prevail at trial when proceeding with charging decisions.

In Cabrera's motion to dismiss filed last Monday, Zona said the CNMI Legislature deemed preliminary hearings a right to be enjoyed by defendants, and that there is nothing in the language of the code or subsequent interpretations of the proceeding to suggest the proceeding was intended to be a rubber stamp of a declaration of probable cause to arrest.

Zona said putting a witness on the stand who knew nothing about the case would not be in compliance with the intent or aim of the rule.

She said Emul had no personal knowledge of the case and was therefore not competent to testify.

Zona said the government sought to establish probable cause using Emul, who admitted he had no personal knowledge of the case and did not work on the case.

"Though the rules of evidence may be relaxed at a preliminary hearing, permitting someone to testify concerning matters completely outside of their knowledge and experience is not only preposterous, it violates the basic tenets of fairness and order in judicial proceedings," she said.

Zona said Emul was not designated by anyone as an expert in this case, and had nothing to add to the government's purported basis for probable cause.

Zona said it seems that Emul's job was simply to read the declaration and regurgitate what he supposedly recalled reading.

She said Emul had no knowledge concerning the case other than what he read in the declaration.

Judge orders hearing to determine reliability of rape victim's memory

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A Superior Court judge has directed that a hearing be held to determine the reliability of the memory of a child, who is an alleged victim in a rape case.

In an order on Monday, Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho said the hearing is intended to establish whether the child's memory of what happened remains reliable after being subjected to suggestive and coercive police interview techniques.

Camacho said the government has the burden to show evidence at the evidentiary hearing in the case against Joseph Seman Epina that the girl retains enough personal knowledge to be able to testify about the events, enough to satisfy Commonwealth Rule of Evidence 602.

Camacho said this evidentiary hearing should be held outside the presence of the jury.

Camacho will issue a separate order setting the evidentiary hearing schedule.

The 43-year-old Epina is facing charges of allegedly raping a then-12-year-old girl at her relative's house on Saipan on March 12, 2016. The girl told police that it was not the first time that Epina sexually assaulted her.

Last May, Camacho granted Epina's request to have an expert in Carolinian culture brought to court.

The Office of the Attorney General charged Epina with sexual assault of a minor in the first degree, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace. The alleged victim is a Carolinian.

Epina, through assistant public defender Cindy Nesbit, moved to exclude testimony of the alleged victim. The court heard the motion last May 8 and Aug. 30.

At the May 8 hearing, the defense presented the expert testimony of Dr. Wendy Bourg, an expert in child psychology, memory science, and forensic interviewing, about memory contamination/memory taint.

Nesbit argued that the questioning techniques used by the government during investigation interviews resulted in inaccurate reporting by the girl and tainted her memory of the events surrounding this case.

Nesbit said the girl was subjected to leading questions and improper interview techniques, which pressured the girl to give the answer she believed the interviewer wanted to hear rather than the truth. That, in effect, allegedly erased her independent memory of what happened.

In opposing Epina's motion, then-assistant attorney general Elizabeth "Betsy" Weintraub argued that the defendant failed to show that the girl's testimony was tainted and unreliable or that any unfair prejudice exists.

In his order last Monday, Camacho said Bourg testified that she could not say whether the girl's memory was, in fact, tainted, but could say that the circumstances which lead to memory contamination were present in this case.

Camacho said issues of alleged memory taint are a matter of first impression within the CNMI.

Camacho said that, according to CNMI precedent, the appropriate standard for motions to exclude on the basis of memory taint is for the burden to be first on a defendant to make an initial showing of memory taint.

Camacho said if a defendant is able to make this initial showing, the burden then shifts to the government to show by a preponderance of evidence that the witness retains sufficient personal knowledge.

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NEW CHARGING STATIONS

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Docomo Pacific is excited to work with the community and business partners to help people stay connected. This month, Docomo Pacific donated charging stations to the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library and the Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan. Each charging station is equipped with lighting cable chargers capable of charging any USB device. Being one with the community is part of the foundation of Docomo Pacific, and we plan to reach out to our community partners for more future projects that will help students, families, and visitors.

Quake death toll at 55 as aftershock hits PNG

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—At least 55 people have been confirmed dead and authorities fear the toll could exceed 100 from last week's powerful earthquake in Papua New Guinea, as survivors faced more shaking early Wednesday from the strongest aftershock so far.

Southern Highlands Governor William Powi told The Associated Press that people were feeling traumatized from the disaster and ongoing aftershocks. The latest large temblor was a magnitude 6.7 quake that struck just after midnight local time, the strongest shake since last Monday's deadly magnitude 7.5 quake that destroyed homes, triggered landslides and halted work at four oil and gas fields.

The central region where the quake struck is remote and undeveloped, and assessments about the scale of the damage and injuries have been slow to filter out. Powi said he didn't know if the latest aftershock had caused more damage or injuries, but he said it had added to the distress people were feeling.

"It is beyond the capacity of the provincial government to cope with the magnitude of destruction and devastation," Powi said. "Our people are traumatized and finding it difficult to cope."

He said provincial authorities were trying to prioritize the greatest needs by getting people with severe injuries to medical centers and providing water and medicine. He said help from abroad and from local aid agencies was slowly coming in.

"It's a mammoth task. Most of the feeder roads are washed away or covered with landslips," he said. "People's livelihoods are devastated, their personal property is gone."

Powi said 39 people had died in his province after families had been crushed by their collapsing homes or buried by landslides during last week's earthquake. He said death reports were still coming in from remote places, and he feared the death toll would rise to over 100.

A spokeswoman at the National Disaster Centre said the official death toll is currently estimated at between 55 and 75 although they don't yet have firm numbers.

The U.S. Geological Survey said Wednesday's quake was centered 112 kilometers (70 miles) southwest of Porgera at a shallow depth of 10 kilometers (6 miles). Ten aftershocks in the hours since ranged between magnitude 4.7 and magnitude 5.2.

Papua New Guinea is home to 7 million people on the eastern half of the island of New Guinea, to the east of Indonesia. It sits on the Pacific's "Ring of Fire," the arc of seismic faults around the Pacific Ocean where most of the world's earthquakes and volcanic activity occur.

10 schools to take part in junior high mock trial

The 13th annual Junior High Mock Trial will take place on Saturday, April 7, from 8am to 12pm, at the CNMI courthouse, where middle school students of the CNMI will be arguing a fictitious case of a shoot out between agents of the Drug Enforcement Agency and a farmer.

This year there will be 10 schools participating: Dandan Middle School, Francisco Mendiola Sablan Middle School, Hopwood Middle School, Eskuelan Francisco De Borja, Dr. Rita Inos Jr. High School, Tinian Jr. High School, Chacha Ocean View Middle School, Saipan International School, Saipan Community School, and Mount Carmel School. Schools will be paired in rounds, which will be presided by a judge.

The CNMI Junior High Mock Trial is a signature program of the Northern Marianas Humanities Council where students learn about the law and standard courtroom procedures in a non-competitive format.

Though the program is non-competitive, special recognition will be given to students who give outstanding performances in their roles as attorneys or witnesses.

The program is free and open to the public. We encourage everyone to show their support for the students.

The CNMI Junior High Mock Trial is made possible through funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities and in partnership with the CNMI Public School System and the CNMI Judiciary.

For more information, call Council staff at 235-4785. ***(PR)***

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB18-DOF/SOF-065

SUBMISSION DATE: APRIL 09, 2018 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF TWO (2) CLASS "F" MID-SIZE PICK-UP TRUCKS, 4X4, FOUR-DOORS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE, OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISION OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ LARRISA C. LARSON
SECRETARY OF FINANCE

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, PROC. & SUPPLY

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JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 08-2018

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(1) AOA Controller/Ground Maintenance (Rota)
(1) Ports Police/ARFF Trainee (Rota)

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the **CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office West Tinian International Airport or Benjamin T. Manglona Rota International Airport.** Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10 year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the West Tinian International Airport or Benjamin T. Manglona Rota International Airport is no later than 5:00 pm on March 09, 2018.

Detailed information on qualifications and position description for the above positions shall be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., except on holidays, at the CPA's Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin. Office at the West Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin T. Manglona Rota International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.tenorio@cpa.gov.mp or cpa.boardsec@pticom.com by phone at (670) 237-6500.

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CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Instant "Massive" BINGO

INSTANT MASSIVE BINGO - SITE OPERATIONS SUPERVISOR

A site operations supervisor shall be in charge of all Bingo operations on site. Manages the day-to-day operations including but not limited to cash management, manpower management, vendor management, purchasing management, assets and supplies management and site business relations management. Primarily in-charge of the site's profitability.

Duties and Responsibilities:
- Handles and manages day-to-day Bingo operations such as attending to the daily cash count, ensuring proper implementation of site's standard operating procedures, organizing the staff schedule, handling and resolving staff/players concerns, and reporting site-related issues.
- Compiles, updates and keeps safe all site legal documents (i.e. application of site legal documents such as Business Permits, Lease Contract Renewals, etc.)
- In charge of identification, proper assignment and hiring of manpower needs.
- Assists purchasing by identifying potential vendors, and if needed, gathering of 3 quotations.
- Ensures proper implementation and execution of marketing promotions and activities in coordination with his/her respective Site Marketing Officer.
- Compiles, consolidates and submits required reports as needed by management.
- Handles all check requisitions, Petty Cash Fund, supplies budget and other operations related finances.
- Assists roll out in locating and identifying new potential sites.
- Attends weekly (or as needed) Operations Meeting with the management.

Qualifications:
Education: College Graduate preferred (Management or business-related courses). Lengthy work experience may offset a College Degree.

Work Experience:
- Has worked with and managed an organization or project (advantage)
- Has good performance as a Bingo assistant or cashier (advantage)
- Willing to work irregular hours and overtime
- Must be creative, outgoing, with strong communication skills and initiative
- Strong Bingo and player knowledge or has experience in a retail or service industry with strong customer relations
- Must be independent and can work under stress with minimum supervision Technical Competencies
- Knowledge in Microsoft Office Suite of Applications
- Knowledge in basic computer hardware and software applications
- Knowledge of Bingo games and simple management systems

Other Skills/Competencies
- Above average interpersonal skills – can relate to people from different levels
- People management skills
- Creativity

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Forward Resumés (CV) with references to imb.operations@gmail.com

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT
FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

AGNES S.N. MAHATO PETITIONER) FCD-DI CIVIL ACTION NO. 18-0020
VS.)
CHANDRA MANI MAHATO) SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATION
Respondent,)

TO THE ABOVE RESPONDENT:
YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is on file with the court, within thirty (30) days after the service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Petitioner whose address is P.O. Box 503346 Saipan MP 96950 as soon as practical after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at P.O. Box 500307 Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or Mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to file and answer in accordance with this summons, judgement by default may be taken against you for relief in the complaint.

Dated this 8th day of February, 2018.

/s/ Clerk of Court

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15th NMC Foundation Golf Tournament

The Northern Marianas College Foundation held its 15th Annual Foundation Open Golf Tournament last Saturday at the west course of the Saipan Laolao Bay Golf Resort. Numerous sponsors contributed to the event, which welcomed 140 golfers and over 50 volunteers. Funds raised from the tournament will be used to support academic programs and services for NMC students.

PHOTOS By NMC

Joe "Kamikaze" Camacho, second from left, poses with NMC Foundation president Mary Tenorio, second from right, NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez, first from left, and 2018 Miss Marianas Celine Conception Cabrera after Camacho placed first in the Senior Flight category.

Participants, including Ben Petersberg, John Cepeda, Marco Peter, and Jeong Jaeyeol, take a photo by their carts before the start of the tournament.

Golfers gather for a quick photo during the tournament.

From left to right, William Retardo, Freddie Cataluna, Franco Santos, and J.J. Atalig pause from their golf game for a quick photo.

Golfers gather with IT&E's banner at NMC Foundation's 15th annual Golf Tournament. IT&E was one of NMC Foundation's major sponsors this year.

Golfers pose for a photo before they head to the golf course.

Roil Soil's Shayne Villanueva was one of the participants and sponsors of the NMC Foundation Golf Tournament.

James Benavente looks for a perfect angle before he makes his shot at hole 17 sponsored by Pacifica Insurance.

Patrick Guerrero looks on after he hits his ball at the 9th hole of the west course of the Saipan Laolao Bay Golf Resort.

Norman Dung Tenorio Jr., second from left, who placed first in the A Flight category, poses with NMC Foundation president Mary Tenorio, second from right, NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez, first from left, and 2018 Miss Marianas Celine Conception Cabrera.

JJ Atalig, second from left, who placed first in the Championship category, poses with NMC Foundation president Mary Tenorio, second from right, NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez, first from left, and 2018 Miss Marianas Celine Conception Cabrera.

Sung Man Cho, second from left, who placed first in the B Flight category, poses with NMC Foundation president Mary Tenorio, second from right, NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez, first from left, and 2018 Miss Marianas Celine Conception Cabrera.

Jeon Me Ae, second from left, who placed first in the Ladies Low Gross category, poses with NMC Foundation president Mary Tenorio, second from right, NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez, first from left, and 2018 Miss Marianas Celine Conception Cabrera.

Northern Marianas College staff and students, who volunteered at the event, take a quick photo at the NMC Foundation Golf Tournament.

From left to right, Northern Marianas College Interim VP of Advancement Frankie Eliptico, NMC Foundation president Mary Tenorio, and tournament director Ben Babauta pose for a quick photo at the beginning of the tournament.

Christian Camacho, from Docomo Pacific, lines up to register at the NMC Foundation's 15th annual Golf Tournament.

Tournament director Ben Babauta gives directions to NMC volunteers before the start of the tournament.

Northern Marianas College president Dr. Carmen Fernandez, second from right, poses with NMC staff members at the foundation golf tournament banquet.

Atkins Kroll Toyota offered a 2017 Toyota Tacoma as a hole-in-one prize at NMC Foundation's 15th annual Golf Tournament.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXVIII, Issue No. 47

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

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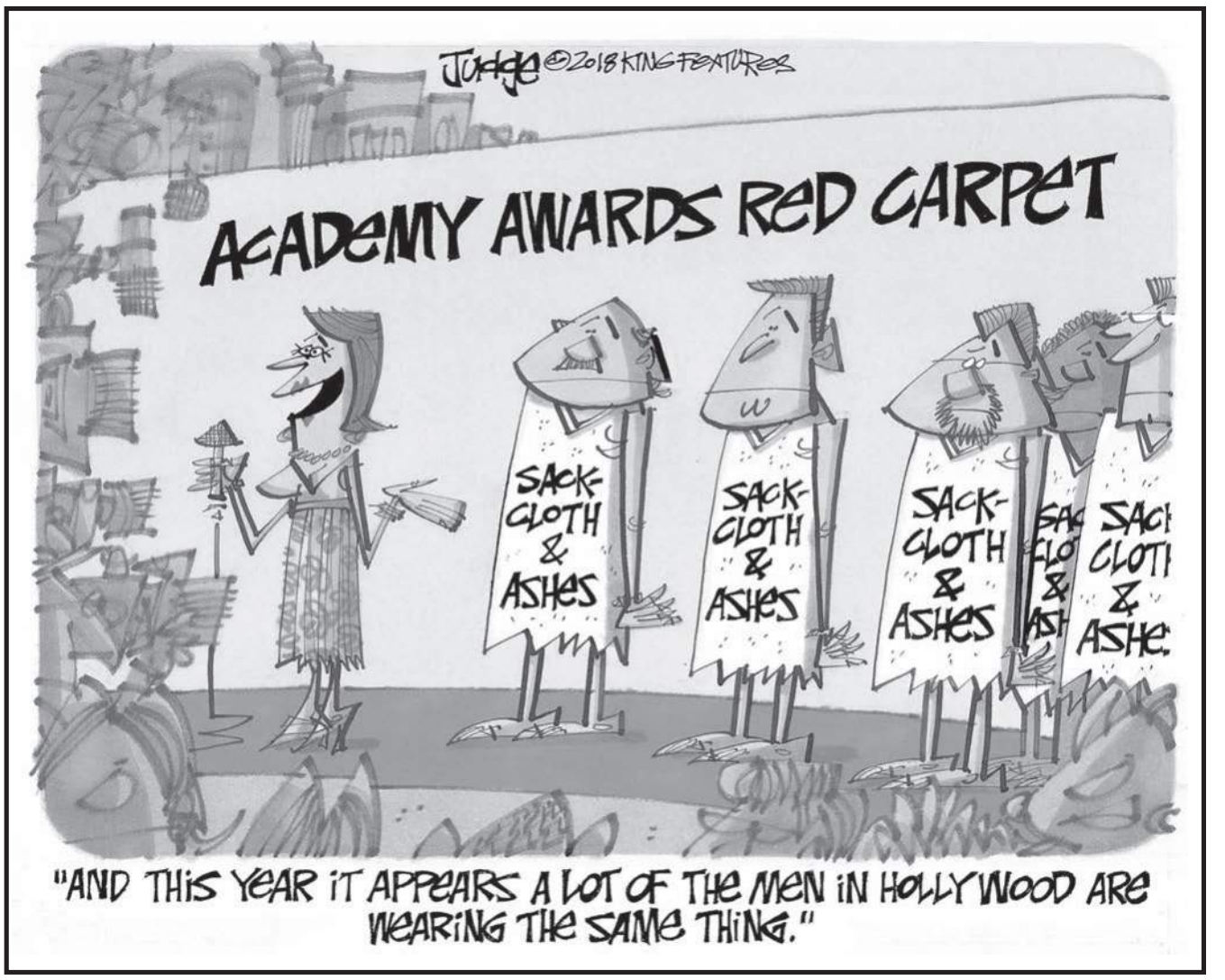
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"AND THIS YEAR IT APPEARS A LOT OF THE MEN IN HOLLYWOOD ARE WEARING THE SAME THING."

EDITORIAL

Actually, trade wars are bad and impossible to win

It's always dangerous to say that Donald Trump has set a new low for presidential discourse, because he sets new lows with dreary regularity. Nonetheless, his heedless declaration that "trade wars are good, and easy to win" deserves special recognition.

No president should need to be told that trade wars are, in fact, bad and impossible to win. By imposing new tariffs on steel and aluminum, Trump has embarked on a policy that is a clear and present danger to U.S. jobs and living standards.

The tariffs are indefensible on their face. They'll raise prices for U.S. consumers and put U.S. companies at a serious disadvantage in export markets. There's no need to go over this ground again: None of the rationales that have been offered in their defense makes sense.

Yet boasting about how easy it is to win a trade war tops almost everything. It adds an element of historical and strategic obliviousness to the administration's economic incompetence.

America's allies and trading partners—including Japan, Canada, Australia, and the European Union—are dismayed. If they aren't exempted, they'll feel compelled to retaliate against the U.S. action, just as the U.S. would retaliate against a unilateral rule-bending act of outright protection against its own producers. The administration will then feel pressure to retaliate against the retaliation. After all, it now has to show that trade wars are "easy to win." A self-defeating spiral of this kind is actually the definition of "trade war."

One of the biggest risks of the Trump presidency has always been the harm it might do to the U.S. and global economies through a reckless approach to trade. Norms and institutions have been built over decades to support international cooperation through commerce. The U.S., far from being disadvantaged by this system of liberal trade, has profited enormously. The new tariffs, and the preposterous comments offered in their defense, suggest that Trump wasn't bluffing: He really does want to tear this system down.

The last time this happened was during the 1930s. The Smoot-Hawley tariffs and the retaliation they provoked contributed to the Great Depression and the collapse of the world economy. Mr. President, what exactly was good about that trade war?

(c)2018 *Bloomberg News*

How polls mislead media on guns and immigration

By RAMESH PONNURU
Bloomberg View

Ramesh Ponnuru is a Bloomberg View columnist. He is a senior editor at National Review, *visiting fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and contributor to CBS News.*

Americans tell pollsters that they want tougher gun laws and legal status for illegal immigrants who came here as minors – the so-called Dreamers. So why haven't such laws been enacted?

Catherine Rampell writes in the Washington Post that it's a mistake to blame "Washington dysfunction." The real culprits, she says, are Republican politicians who are out of step with public opinion, even among Republican voters.

She stacks the deck a little in making her case. It's not just Republicans who defeated a proposed ban on assault weapons in 2013. Sixteen Democrats (counting Angus King of Maine, an independent who caucuses with the Democrats) joined them in voting it down. It's misleading to say that Republicans have made it easier for people "with mental illness" to buy guns; as the ACLU pointed out, the regulation in question concerned people who have a mental impairment that leads them to have others help them manage their government benefits.

Rampell's reference to "NRA-funded Republican politicians" implies that the group's clout comes mainly from its donations, when most people who have looked at the question think its sympathizers' votes are more important.

These are quibbles. Rampell's basic observation is correct: There does seem to be a disconnect between several poll findings and the behavior of Republican politicians. But the explanation may lie in the limitations of polling as a guide to what the public really thinks.

Start with immigration. Rampell cites a Quinnipiac poll that found that 81 percent of respondents, including 68 percent of Republicans, favor "allowing undocumented immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children to remain in the United States and eventually apply for citizenship."

That's probably why most Republican politicians, including President Donald Trump, say that they favor it too. But Trump says he wants a law that provides for that amnesty and also makes other changes to immigration laws. It's disagreement over what a deal should include that has so far prevented action.

Does the public think that the amnesty should be passed on its own, or combined with some or all of Trump's immigration priorities? The Quinnipiac poll didn't ask. Other pollsters haven't either, probably because it is implausible that most people have an opinion at that level of detail. But the Harvard-Harris poll asked registered voters if they favor a deal that combined an amnesty with some Trump proposals, including an end to the diversity-lottery visa. It found 63 percent approval.

Quinnipiac has also found that 95 percent of respondents support "requiring background checks for all gun buyers." As Rampell points out, that includes huge majorities of Republican voters. But that poll wording leaves out the causes of controversy: whether private gun sales and gifts should be covered, and whether the checks should be used to form a registry. When the arguments have been aired in referendums, expanded background checks have not generated that nearly universal support. Washington State passed a background-check law with 60 percent of the vote, Nevada with a razor-thin 50.45 percent majority. In Maine, a background-check referendum narrowly lost with 48 percent of the vote.

Rampell cites an NPR/Ipsos poll finding that roughly 80 percent of Americans want to ban "assault-style weapons," a number that again includes most Republicans. But polls on this question have been all over the place. Gallup, the CBS News poll and the Washington Post-ABC News poll all found 48 percent to 50 percent support for banning assault weapons; Quinnipiac found 67 percent.

Polling is useful. We can confidently say that the vast majority of Americans want to let people who came here illegally as minors stay and apply for citizenship, because that's what the polls consistently tell us. But seeing poll results can lead us to overestimate how firm a lot of people's views really are.

My point isn't to let Republicans off the hook. If you favor more stringent regulation of guns or passing an amnesty for the Dreamers with nothing else attached, nothing I've written here is meant to change your mind. But if you're angry at Republicans over these issues, you shouldn't be angry at them for failing to follow public opinion. You should be angry at them for failing to lead the country in the right direction.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Make sure your kids know guns threats and school shootings are not joking matters

By ACQUIELYNN FLOYD
The Dallas Morning News

Some threats are hollow. Most of them, probably.

We're not actually losing sleep for fear that Kim Jong Un has his stubby finger on the nuke button, or that Ralph Kramden ever seriously contemplated sending Alice "to the moon." It's theater.

But—and this cannot be reiterated strongly enough to the children and teens and students in our lives—there is no such thing as a gun joke. Not any more.

"Joke" and "hoax" and "prank" are no longer acceptable explanations for threats involving gun violence. A shamefaced confession that you were just showing off will no longer get you off the hook.

People in this country are too rattled, and there is too much at stake. Big talk about "shooting up the school" is headed in the same direction as bomb jokes at the airport.

Regrettably, it can take a little time for this realization to sink into the human brain in general, and—no offense, I'm just talking in statistical terms here—into the brain of the adolescent male in particular.

This isn't to say that most kids would even dream of doing something so dumb and dangerous as to threaten a shooting.

But enough "copycat" threats have been leveled in the wake of the Feb. 14 Parkland, Fla., massacre to make me wonder whether parents need to add yet another entry to the exhaustive list of sober "talks" they need to have with their kids. This one: Foolish Gun Talk Can Screw Up Your Life.

On Sunday, a 15-year-old student was arrested in Weatherford, Texas, for posting a threat on Snapchat in which he said he would "shoot up" a local high school on the following day. The kid told sheriff's officials it was a joke. Two 15-year-old Granbury, Texas, boys were arrested Friday after making a social media threat against their school.

If cases like these have ever been handled with a call to the parents and a good talking-to, they aren't now: These kids are now being held in juvenile detention centers, facing felony charges of making terroristic threats.

It's teens who are the most pointedly affected right now: by the Parkland shooting itself, and by an evolving sense of activism, and for some, by a powerful temptation to make stupid and irreversible copycat threats. Telling authorities they didn't mean it won't buy anybody a pass, because the authorities cannot afford to make the wrong call.

I'm not talking here about kids who are seriously troubled and bent on violence. The 19-year-old Parkland shooter's rampage didn't surprise the people who knew him personally—he had been telegraphing his plan for years.

But it's precisely because so many observers and institutions failed to stop him that even a minor margin for "red flag" tolerance has been erased. If an otherwise "good kid" makes a dumb shooting-up-the-school joke right now, few will care about his record. They'll care about what he (or she) said.

A South Carolina ninth-grader was arrested Feb. 15, after he posted a Snapchat photo warning, "Round 2 of Florida Tomorrow." He told authorities he thought he was being funny.

An 11-year-old Florida girl wrote a threatening note—"I will bring a gun to school and shoot all of you"—and slipped it under an assistant principal's office. She said other kids put her up to it.

An 18-year-old in Montana was arrested after posting several threats to "shoot up" his high school. According to court records, he told police he was joking and he was sorry to have scared anybody.

The rash of similar school threats over the last few weeks is genuinely startling. In the Dallas area alone, five teens were arrested for either having guns at school or making threats within 24 hours of the Florida shooting.

Were they dangerous copycats, kids so seriously disturbed they viewed the Florida killer as an inspiration? Or has threatening gun talk and carrying weapons become another titillating source of hallway rumor and internet chat, like sex and drugs? I don't know.

Parents and teachers and principals and cops can't be sure, either, which is why they cannot afford to take any chances.

The likelihood of students being threatened with violence in American schools remains statistically remote, and some studies suggest it's actually on the decline. Plain facts show that children face more danger in their homes than at school.

Which is not particularly reassuring for stressed-out parents, or for a public half-enraged, half-numbed by unhinged gun massacres.

There are some sad, frightening people out there. That the worst of them achieve instant fame is an indictment of our culture. That there are some teenagers out there who find them inspiring is deeply disturbing.

Some teenagers, though, still have it in their heads that this is some kind of social media game. Those are the ones who thought it was a joke or just wanted to impress the other kids. They are trying our patience.

So whether you're a gun owner or not, whether or not you support arming teachers or posting guards and metal detectors at every school door, let's agree that we can tell our kids this: Guns may be many things, but they are not funny.

There's no such thing as a "joke" involving the threat of mass murder. The reality is exactly what those warning signs at the airport say: All threats will be taken seriously.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

On the CNMI horizon

Illegal hiring of construction workers is at its worst. CNMI and federal labor enforcement partnership is critically needed to monitor construction projects and site to ensure that all workers have legal work permits.

As we have seen and continue to see, some CW employees resign from one employer and work for another employer or company without an approved work permit. For example, eight construction workers ran away to another construction company and are illegally working there with a higher salary.

Illegal business practices are rampant in the Chinese business community. From illegal hiring, drugs, pesticides, concealment of expensive commodities to avoid paying taxes, illegal gambling, human trafficking, prostitution, and the list goes on. It's all with federal and local government records.

Na para napara (enough is enough), *taya respeto* (no respect), especially foreign businesses that create their mess and leave the island.

The CNMI needs legitimate investors that adhere to the rule of law that will bring a win-win to the CNMI and their business.

The antidote requires CNMI and federal enforcement partnership, strict penalties, and a repeat offense ban from doing business in the CNMI.

Let's make the CNMI great again. *Ta fan tacho taotao*, the Chamolinian way.

Fel Lieto Kalen
Tanapag, Saipan

Republicans don't care about fixing Congress

By JONATHAN BERNSTEIN
Bloomberg View

Jonathan Bernstein is a Bloomberg View columnist. He taught political science at the University of Texas at San Antonio and DePauw University and wrote A Plain Blog About Politics.

Political polarization has been tearing apart Washington for years, but Republicans have found a way to make it even worse. Unlike just a few years ago, Congress now suffers all of the costs of partisan polarization without many of the very real benefits.

Here's an example. USA Today's Brad Heath notes something fascinating about the Republican attacks on Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation. In short, they're just lashing out at random pieces of the criminal justice system because those things are at the moment inconvenient for them. There's no sustained argument that they're actually wrong in any way:

This seems awfully familiar because, well, because it is. Republicans in 2009-2010 came up with a bunch of criticisms ostensibly about the way Democrats were running Congress—using reconciliation procedures, adjusting bills in leadership offices without input from opponents, rushing bills to the floor without giving the minority party time to study it, failing to personally read bills—that were actually just standard practice for years, including years when Republicans were in the majority. And they treated Barack Obama as a power-mad Caesar who ignored limits on the presidency for things such as recess appointments, executive action, and (my favorite) czars. All things that were pretty standard parts of the presidency for decades.

In other words, instead of cogent, responsible criticisms of the way the in-party is running things, Republicans have just been demonizing more-or-less random parts of how the government works.

It's OK when minority party senators strongly support the filibuster right up to the point when they win back the majority. It's also OK when a minority party seeks out procedural complaints that generate media attention. Those tend to be bugs that ought to be fixed, and out-party incentives get the ball rolling.

If the minority party succeeds, the majority is forced to adopt reforms. Even if the majority recognizes that few Americans vote based on issues of legislative process, for example, they still don't want a parade of negative stories. And the minority party will, once it eventually wins, feel some pressure to implement at least some of the reforms they acted so outraged about before they won. For example, I think it's very likely Democrats will legislate a requirement that presidential candidates release their tax returns, even if it's far too late to punish Trump by the time Democrats get their next majorities. Similarly, President Obama instituted new ethics rules within his administration in 2009 after Democrats had criticized the practices of the George W. Bush administration. Partisan criticisms become a source of government reform.

The problem is that Republican politicians have become lazy. What's the point of making a cogent, responsible case for process failures or corruption (or anything else) if you don't need to? Fox News and conservative talk radio will happily echo whatever nutty claims the party's politicians make.

That in turn means that instead of producing at least potentially useful and needed reforms, Republicans mostly just spout gibberish when they make process complaints. Even when they hit on a good one, such as the complaint that the majority leader, a Democrat, was "filling the tree" in order to prevent the Senate from considering amendments, there's absolutely no pressure on Republicans to fix the problem once they have the votes. Republican-aligned media won't hold them to it, and Republican politicians increasingly don't care what the "neutral" media reports.

The last piece of this is that Republican reliance on party-aligned media also reduces pressure from Democrats over process when Republicans are in the majority. After all, people getting most of their information from Fox News aren't going to be aware of those complaints, even if neutral outlets report on them.

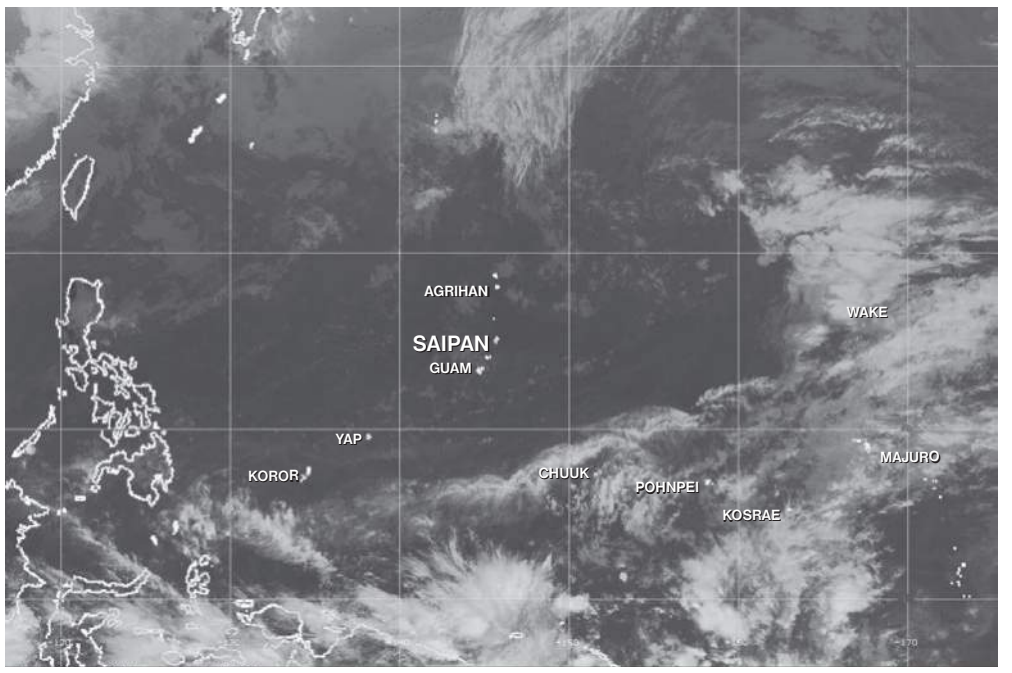
There's no organized group to look out for a healthy political process, at least in many cases. Pressure from out-parties is really all we have. And right now, that's not working nearly as well as it should be.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers. Northeast winds 5 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲89° ▼77°	▲89° ▼77°	▲89° ▼77°	▲89° ▼77°	▲89° ▼77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 6:05 AM, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7, 2018
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Other than minor adjustments to weather late in the week and the weekend, the forecast is unchanged. The next week will be dry, with isolated showers today, but only a slight chance the rest of the week. Winds will generally be decreasing slowly the next couple of days before recovering over the weekend. Seas will change little this week, with a moderate rip risk and a moderate north swell.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	86° / 75°
Palau	Showers	86° / 77°
Yap	Partly Cloudy	84° / 78°
Chuuk	Cloudy	84° / 79°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorm	82° / 78°
Kosrae	Thunderstorm	82° / 78°
Majuro	Thunderstorm	84° / 79°

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Thunderstorm	72° / 64°
Beijing	Sunny	46° / 21°
Hong Kong	Showers	63° / 54°
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	77° / 67°
London	Showers	48° / 37°
Los Angeles	Cloudy	71° / 50°
Manila	Thunderstorm	91° / 77°
Melbourne	Sunny	82° / 55°
Miami	Thunderstorm	82° / 57°
New York	Mixed	38° / 33°
Osaka	Rain	55° / 52°
Paris	Showers	48° / 39°
Busan	Rain	48° / 39°
Rome	Mostly Sunny	61° / 48°
Salem	Sunny	58° / 34°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	61° / 50°
Seoul	Showers	48° / 28°
Tokyo	Rain	46° / 45°
Washington, DC	Showers	43° / 32°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
12:19 AM	LOW TIDE	1.55
6:06 AM	HIGH TIDE	0.89
11:37 AM	LOW TIDE	1.73
6:58 PM	HIGH TIDE	0.29

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:29 AM	6:25 PM
Friday	6:29 AM	6:26 PM
Saturday	6:28 AM	6:26 PM
Sunday	6:27 AM	6:26 PM
Monday	6:27 AM	6:26 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	10:58 am	-
Friday	12:00 am	11:42 pm	-
Saturday	12:50 am	12:28 pm	-
Sunday	1:39 am	1:15 pm	-
Monday	2:27 am	2:03 pm	-

NMI CRIME STOPPERS
Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

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SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 19, 2017

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA6394	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA6392	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA6391	1:30pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota
UA6390	2:20pm	3:10pm	2, 3, 6
UA6398	6:05pm	6:55pm	Daily
UA6396	9:50pm	10:40pm	Daily

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA6391	1:30pm	2:05pm	1, 4, 5, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA6391	2:35pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL297	4:20pm	7:15pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	3:10am	6:10am	1, 7
7C3451	4:00am	7:05am	4, 5

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

TW308	2:00am	6:05am	Daily
OZ626	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
LJ652	3:40am	7:30am	1, 4, 5, 7
7C3403	4:45am	8:30am	Daily
7C3401	4:00pm	7:45pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	5:40am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (HGH)

JD396	7:30am	12:00pm	1
JD396	4:50pm	10:00pm	4

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	6:35am	3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/701	2:10am	10:55am	1 via ICN
OZ626/701	2:50am	10:55am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA6394/191	4:15am	9:00am	2, 3, 6, 7 via GUM
UA6394/PR111	4:15am	8:10am	7 via GUM
UA6394/PR111	4:15am	9:20am	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via GUM
UA6398/183	6:05pm	9:40pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA6398/183	6:05pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA6398/193	6:05pm	11:50pm	2, 5 via GUM-ROR

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

HX077	1:50am	5:15am	1, 4
OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UO43	5:45am	8:40am	1, 3, 5, 7
UA6398/159	6:05pm	11:00pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA6393	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA6395	7:15am	8:05am	Daily
UA6391	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA6390	12:10pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6 via Rota
UA6397	4:45pm	5:35pm	Daily
UA6399	8:30pm	9:20pm	Daily

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA6390	12:10pm	12:45pm	2, 3, 6

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA6390	1:15pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:30am	3:05pm	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	9:00pm	2:10am+1	4
7C3452	9:05pm	2:10am+1	3, 6, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3402	9:30am	3:00pm	Daily
OZ625	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
TW307	7:45pm	1:00am+1	Daily
OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
LJ651	9:10pm	2:40am+1	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3404	10:10pm	3:40am+1	Daily

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:20pm	4:30am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

HANGZHOU (HGH)-SAIPAN

JD395	8:25am	3:30pm	4
JD395	9:55pm	5:00am+1	7

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:25pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA182/6395	12:40am	8:05am	3, 6 via GUM
UA190/6397	9:55am	5:35pm	2, 3, 6, 7 via GUM
OZ702/625	12:25pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/625	12:25pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/UA6395	10:05pm	8:05am+1	Daily via GUM
UA192/6395	10:30pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via ROR-GUM
UA184/6395	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
HX076	5:15pm	12:15am+1	3, 7
UO42	6:50pm	1:45am+1	7
UO42	9:30pm	4:25am+1	2, 4, 6
UA116/6395	11:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U Sichuan Airlines, 7C Jeju Air, DL Delta Airlines, JD Beijing Capital, UO HK Express, HX HongKong Airlines, LJ Jin Air, MU China Eastern, OZ Asiana Airlines, TW t'way Air, UA United Airlines, PR PAL Express; ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The* Saipan Tribune *is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	7:30AM	8:00AM	Daily
1302	11:30AM	12:00PM	Daily
1303	4:00PM	4:30PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	8:15AM	8:45AM	Daily
3102	1:45PM	2:15PM	Daily
3103	4:45PM	5:15PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15PM	12:45PM	Daily

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	1:00PM	1:30PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
1202	8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
1203	9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
1204	10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
1205	11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
1206	12:00PM	12:15PM	Daily
1207	1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
1208	2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
1209	3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
1210	4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
1211	5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
1212	6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2102	7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
2103	8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
2104	9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
2105	10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
2106	11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
2107	12:30PM	12:45PM	Daily
2108	1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2109	2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
2110	3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
2111	4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
2112	5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
2113	6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Rural women are defining Pacific resilience

"Despite the myriad challenges they face, rural women are helping define Pacific resilience today," said Pacific Community director-general Dr. Colin Tukuitonga on the eve of International Women's Day.

"Like their counterparts around the world, rural women in the Pacific Islands region certainly do not have it easy. They often lack access to basic services and infrastructure such as water and sanitation, electricity, health, and education. They are more at risk of domestic violence and unwanted pregnancies than women in urban areas. Rural women are also more exposed to the adverse impacts of climate change like cyclones and droughts," Tukuitonga said.

Building on the momentum of International Women's Day 2018, SPC is reiterating its commitment to work alongside Pacific Island governments to improve the lives and livelihoods of Pacific rural women.

"SPC works in more than 20 sectors and is renowned for knowledge and innovation in areas such as fisheries science, public health surveillance, geoscience, and conservation of plant genetic resources for food security to name a few. Our programs inevitably impact rural women, whether through policy development or capacity building on the ground. We recognized early on through our work on gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment that the needs, concerns, and the knowledge of Pacific rural women is critical to achieving the region's development goals. While we strive to provide impactful technical support on the ground, we also seek to utilize and engage with rural women networks and organizations because they are often organized and would know how to mobilize around pertinent issues we face today such as climate change and natural disasters," Tukuitonga said.

Women are increasingly taking over roles of men in villages, as men had to move into towns to look for work.

Research undertaken by SPC in Fiji, after Cyclone Winston showed that women were increasingly taking over roles of men in villages, as men had to move into towns to look for work. At the height of cyclone Winston, community health workers who are mostly women, in all villages affected by the cyclone found themselves in desperate situations as the wounded came to them for medical attention as roads and bridges to the nearest health centers were blocked by fallen trees or electricity poles.

Despite this Pacific rural women show great tenacity and resilience when it comes to living and working in their environment. Pacific rural women walk miles to custom bush gardens to grow food for their families and they work for hours gleaning marine life to sell in the market to earn an income for their families. Yet rural women in the Pacific face some of the biggest development challenges. On average in the region, 50% of ever partnered rural women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence. In Fiji, 60% of rural women compared to 27% of urban women are in vulnerable employment. Intense outreach and focus on adolescent sexual and reproductive health information and services is needed for Pacific youth and in particular rural young women. Despite a decline in teenage pregnancy across the Pacific, fertility rates among 15-19-year-old women tend to be significantly higher in rural than in urban areas.

"International Women's Day is a time to reflect on the remarkable diversity of women in the Pacific and their individual and collective experiences, as well as the many ways in which development organizations like SPC can make a meaningful and lasting contribution to their lives," said Tukuitonga.

The empowerment of rural women and girls will be a priority theme at the 62nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations headquarters in New York from March 12 to 23. SPC will be supporting the Pacific islands delegates to raise awareness of the global community on the priorities of Pacific women and to share their experiences and concerns in building resilient communities through their participation in side events and panel discussions. SPC will also support Pacific Island countries in the negotiations of the agreed conclusions which will outline the priorities at the global level for empowering rural women and girls. ***(SPC)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of the Secretary of Public Works
2nd Floor Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION FOR BIDS
DPW-18-IFB-011

RENOVATION OF GOVERNMENT HOUSE NO. 1223-CNMI WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN

Governor Ralph Dlg. Torres and Lt. Governor Victor B. Hocog, through the Department of Public Works (DPW) are soliciting sealed bids for **Renovation of Government House No. 1223-CNMI Women's Association Capitol Hill**, Saipan Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

The project package will be available on or after **February 22, 2018** at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan. A non-refundable payment of **One Hundred Dollars ($100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Teasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at the DPW Technical Services Division.

All interested bidders are also required to include Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC can be obtained at the Department of Commerce/Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations currently in effect."

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITUES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **March 13, 2018**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the project site, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **March 21, 2018** to **Ms. Crystal C. Cabrera, Acting Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

Prospective bidders should examine and review the invitation for bids with care. If it should appear to a prospective bidder that the performance of the work under the contract or any of the matters relative thereto is not sufficiently described or explained in the invitation for bids, or that any discrepancy exists between different parts of the invitation for bids, or that full intent of the invitation for bids is not clear, then the prospective bidder shall submit a written request for clarification no later than ten (10) working days before the scheduled bid opening at 4:30 pm to **Ms. Crystal C. Cabrera, Acting Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. The prospective bidder shall examine carefully the site of the proposed work and the invitation for bids before submitting a bid.

The Contracting Officer (CO) may, upon recommendation of the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR), issue an addendum notifying all prospective bidders known to have received an invitation for bids, or if issued after the deadline for submission of the notice of intention to bid, to those persons who submitted such notice, of any changes to the invitation for bids. The Department of Public Works will make every reasonable attempt to notify all persons who obtained the invitation for bids from the Technical Services Division by telephone to pick up the addendum or if the CO chooses, the addendum may be mailed or delivered personally or by facsimile machine. If the bid proposal requires the acknowledgment of addenda, the prospective bidder shall indicate the date of each addendum in the space provided. **It shall be the prospective bidder's responsibility to confirm the existence of any addendum by telephoning the COTR at (670) 234-9828/9838 no later than ten (10) Calendar days before the scheduled bid opening.**

Sealed bids must be marked **"DPW-18-IFB-011"**. For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Office of the Director of Procurement and Supply, located at the former Emergency Management Office, Ascencion Drive, Building No. 1301, Capitol Hill, Saipan, no later than **10:00 a.m. local time March 29, 2018**. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional Seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to bid. Notices of Intent to bid must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than **10:00 a.m. local time, March 29, 2018**, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than **March 29, 2018** and the BID documents must be received at the Office of the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than **April 9, 2018**. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Office of the Director of Procurement and Supply, located at the former Emergency Management Office, Ascencion Drive, Building No. 1301, Capitol Hill, Saipan, at **10:30 a.m. local time, April 12, 2018**. However, if no notices of intent to bid were received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at **10:30 a.m. local time, on March 29, 2018**.

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars **($25,000.00)** a bid security of fifteen (15%) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. **Bid security shall be on a bid bond, in cash, by certified check, cashiers check or other form acceptable to the government. A surety company shall hold the certificate of authority from the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Surety requiring approval of the Attorney General must be pre-approved prior to bid submission.** Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660". If a bid bond is submitted it must be accompanied by an Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC).

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations **§70-30.3-245**. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price for contracts greater than $25,000.00. Prior to the execution of the contract, the selected contractor shall submit:

a) A current license from the bonding company showing that it has authority to issue bond in the CNMI, and
b) A certification from the bonding company that the unencumbered value of its assets (exclusive of all outstanding commitments on other bond obligations) exceed the penal amount of each bond.

A contractor submitting an unacceptable payment or performance bond may be permitted a reasonable time, as determined by the P&S Director, to substitute an acceptable bond prior to executing a contract.

Acceptable assets are only:

1) Cash
2) US Gov't Securities
3) Stocks and Bonds traded on US Security Exchange
4) Real Property owned in fee simple in US; and
5) Irrevocable Letters of Credit

Performance time for completion of this project is **One Hundred Twenty (120) working calendar** days upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. Liquidated damages for delays beyond the established completion date will be assessed at the rate of **One Hundred (US$100.00)** for each and every day the work is delayed beyond the established completion date.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not affect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

PETER P. CAMACHO
Acting Secretary of Public Works

HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director of Procurement & Supply

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of the Secretary of Public Works
2nd Floor Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION FOR BIDS
DPW18-IFB-013

AS-TEO ROAD AND DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENT

Governor Ralph Dlg. Torres and Lt. Governor Victor B. Hocog, through the Department of Public Works (DPW) are soliciting sealed bids for **As-Teo Road and Drainage Improvement**, Saipan Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

The project package will be available on or after **March 8, 2018** at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan. A non-refundable payment of **One Hundred Dollars ($100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Teasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at the DPW Technical Services Division.

All interested bidders are also required to include Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC can be obtained at the Department of Commerce/Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations currently in effect."

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITUES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **March 27, 2018**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **April 3, 2018** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

Prospective bidders should examine and review the invitation for bids with care. If it should appear to a prospective bidder that the performance of the work under the contract or any of the matters relative thereto is not sufficiently described or explained in the invitation for bids, or that any discrepancy exists between different parts of the invitation for bids, or that full intent of the invitation for bids is not clear, then the prospective bidder shall submit a written request for clarification no later than ten (10) working days before the scheduled bid opening at 4:30 pm to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho**, **Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547.

The prospective bidder shall examine carefully the site of the proposed work and the invitation for bids before submitting a bid.

The Contracting Officer (CO) may, upon recommendation of the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR), issue an addendum notifying all prospective bidders known to have received an invitation for bids, or if issued after the deadline for submission of the notice of intention to bid, to those persons who submitted such notice, of any changes to the invitation for bids. The Department of Public Works will make every reasonable attempt to notify all persons who obtained the invitation for bids from the Technical Services Division by telephone to pick up the addendum or if the CO chooses, the addendum may be mailed or delivered personally or by facsimile machine. If the bid proposal requires the acknowledgment of addenda, the prospective bidder shall indicate the date of each addendum in the space provided. **It shall be the prospective bidder's responsibility to confirm the existence of any addendum by telephoning the COTR at (670) 234-9828/9838 no later than ten (10) Calendar days before the scheduled bid opening.**

Sealed bids must be marked **"DPW18-IFB-013"**. For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Office of the Director of Procurement and Supply, located at the former Emergency Management Office, Ascencion Drive, Building No. 1301, Capitol Hill, Saipan, no later than **10:30 a.m. local time April 6, 2018.** Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional Seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to bid. Notices of Intent to bid must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than **10:30 a.m. local time, April 6, 2018**, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than **April 6, 2018** and the BID documents must be received at the Office of the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than **April 17, 2018**. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Office of the Director of Procurement and Supply, located at the former Emergency Management Office, Ascencion Drive, Building No. 1301, Capitol Hill, Saipan, at **10:30 a.m. local time, April 20, 2018.** However, if no notices of intent to bid were received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at **10:30 a.m. local time, on April 6, 2018.**

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars **($25,000.00)** a bid security of fifteen (15%) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. **Bid security shall be on a bid bond, in cash, by certified check, cashiers check or other form acceptable to the government. A surety company shall hold the certificate of authority from the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Surety requiring approval of the Attorney General must be pre-approved prior to bid submission.** Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660". If a bid bond is submitted it must be accompanied by an Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC).

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations **§70-30.3-245**. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price for contracts greater than $25,000.00. Prior to the execution of the contract, the selected contractor shall submit:

a) A current license from the bonding company showing that it has authority to issue bond in the CNMI, and
b) A certification from the bonding company that the unencumbered value of its assets (exclusive of all outstanding commitments on other bond obligations) exceed the penal amount of each bond.

A contractor submitting an unacceptable payment or performance bond may be permitted a reasonable time, as determined by the P&S Director, to substitute an acceptable bond prior to executing a contract.

Acceptable assets are only:

1) Cash
2) US Gov't Securities
3) Stocks and Bonds traded on US Security Exchange
4) Real Property owned in fee simple in US; and
5) Irrevocable Letters of Credit

Performance time for completion of this project is **Two Hundred Ten (210) calendar days** upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. Liquidated damages for delays beyond the established completion date will be assessed at the rate of **One Hundred (US$100.00)** for each and every day the work is delayed beyond the established completion date.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not affect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

JAMES A. ADA
Secretary of Public Works

HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director of Procurement & Supply

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MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

USDOL program expedites payment to American workers

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Wage and Hour Division of the U.S. Department of Labor is launching a new program, the Payroll Audit Independent Determination program, or PAID, which expedites resolution of inadvertent overtime and minimum wage violations under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

The PAID program will ensure that more employees receive back wages they are owed—faster. Employees will receive 100 percent of the back wages paid, without having to pay any litigation expenses, attorneys' fees, or other costs that may be applicable to private actions.

The PAID program facilitates resolution of potential violations, without litigation, and ensures employees promptly receive the wages they are owed. Under this program, the division will oversee resolution of the potential violations by assessing the amount of wages due and supervising their payment to employees.

The division will not impose penalties or liquidated damages to finalize a settlement for employers who choose to participate in the PAID program and work with the division to fix and resolve their potential compensation errors.

Employers may not participate in the PAID program if they are in litigation or currently under investigation by the division for the practices at issue.

Employers likewise cannot use the pilot program repeatedly to resolve the same potential violations, as this program is designed to identify and correct potentially non-compliant practices.

Settlements will be limited in scope to only the potential violations at issue.

The program further requires employers to review the division's compliance assistance materials, audit their pay practices, and agree to correct the pay practices at issue going forward. These requirements improve the employers' compliance with their minimum wage and overtime obligations, which helps ensure employees' rights are protected.

The division will implement the pilot program nationwide for about six months, after which it will evaluate the pilot and consider future options. The division encourages employers to proactively audit their compensation practices to identify potential non-compliant practices. More information concerning the pilot program is available at www.dol.gov/whd/paid. ***(PR)***

BLESSING OF THE PROJECT SITE
Fr. James S. Balajadia blesses the project site of Rufina Tropicals, the CNMI's first agri-tourism and plant export company, during Sunday's groundbreaking ceremony across the airport field. Behind Balajadia are the company's owner, Rowina O. Torres, and her husband, Vincent DLG. Torres. Completion of construction work is expected in September 2018.
FERDIE DE LA TORRE

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Free USCIS workshop at Saipan library today

Officers from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services will present a free event today, March 8, at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, starting at 5pm. They'll present a one-hour workshop covering immigration and the naturalization process. The public is invited to attend. This session is part of a larger USCIS initiative to help immigrants better understand the many services available. For more information, contact Sharon Rummery at (415)248-8873. ***(PR)***

Survivors, caregivers support meeting today

All people facing cancer, their family members, and caregivers are invited to the Commonwealth Cancer Association support meeting today, March 8, 2018, starting at 5:30pm at the Hyatt Regency Saipan's Chamolinian Room. Guest speaker will be Helen C. Sablan, director, Medicaid Program, CHCC. To RSVP or for more information, call the CCA at 682-0050 or email at ccamarianas@gmail.com. ***(PR)***

USCIS' Mathur at SHRM meeting today

The Society for Human Resource Management-CNMI Chapter will be holding a special meeting today, March 8, featuring Kamana Mathur of USCIS Pacific District, who will speak about the Form I-9 process. The SHRM meeting will be held at the PIC's Charley's, from 11:30am to 2pm. The presentation includes the PIC lunch buffet at the cost of $20 for SHRM members and $30 for non-members. Reserve your seat by contacting Penny Jones by e-mail at penelope.jones@hyatt.com or Denise Montenegro at denise.montenegro@hyatt.com or by telephone at 323-5867/68. ***(SHRM)***

Military training at Warning Area 12

ASAN, Guam—The U.S. military will conduct training at Warning Area 12 during the following dates and times:

- March 8, from 7am to 7pm
- March 9, from 7am to 6pm
- March 10, from 6am to 6pm
- March 11, from 6am to 4pm

It is recommended the public, fishermen and marine tour operators monitor the Coast Guard broadcast notice to mariners for advisories. W-12 begins south of Guam and extends south-southwest in international waters. ***(PR)***

Scheduled power outage on March 9 and 10

There will be a scheduled power interruption on Friday, March 9, and Saturday, March 10, from 6am to 11am to allow the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. line crew to replace eight 45-foot wooden poles with concrete poles along Chalan Pale Arnold Road on Lower Navy Hill. The Lower Navy Hill area will be affected by this power outage but not water wells. The S-8 wastewater lift station will be affected. For more information, contact the CUC Customer Call Center (664-4282) or monitor its Facebook page for the latest updates. ***(CUC)***

Philippine consular outreach

The Philippine Consulate General in Guam will be holding a mobile consular outreach on Saipan on March 13-15, at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe. Note that all e-passport applications require the personal appearance of the applicant. Please wear proper attire (i.e., shirt with collar). For more information and confirmation, call (670)233-6293 and ask for Mel Santos. ***(PR)***

Women's Month events

In celebration of CNMI Women's Month, the public is invited to attend the following free events this week**:**

- March 8, Thursday: Parenting tips at KKMP radio, 7:30am
- March 8, Thursday: Women arts & crafts at Thursday Street Market, Garapan Fishing Base, 5pm
- March 9, Friday: Oral health presentation, Garapan Community Development Center (next to the Carolinian Affairs Office), 1:30pm

To schedule a free oral health exam between March 5-15, 2018, females 16 years old and older may call the Commonwealth Health Center Dental Clinic at 236-8369 to make a 1pm - 3pm appointment.

- March 9, Friday: NMC-CDI Computer Tech Hour, Bldg. W, Northern Marianas College, 5pm - 7pm. ***(PR)***

OPA ethics presentation on Rota, Tinian

The Office of the Public Auditor will be conducting ethics presentations on Tinian on March 9, 2018, at the Northern Marianas College Tinian Instructional Site, Room D. There will be a morning and afternoon session at 10am and 2pm. If an agency or group of government employees are interested in the presentation, contact the OPA at telephone number (670)322-6481/2. The OPA staff will also be notarizing and accepting filings of financial disclosure statements from government officials. All filers are reminded to bring with them some form of photo identification, such as a driver's license or a passport. Failure to do so may result in the denial of notary services. ***(OPA)***

Military training at Warning Area 517, FDM

ASAN, Guam—The U.S. military will conduct training at Warning Area 517 during the following dates and times:

- March 8, from 7am to 7pm
- March 9, from 7am to 6pm
- March 10, from 6am to 6pm
- March 11, from 6am to 4pm

The military will also conduct training at the island of Farallon de Medinilla during the following dates and times:

- March 7-8, from 11am to 7:30pm
- March 9, from 10am to noon

It is recommended the public, fishermen and marine tour operators monitor the Coast Guard broadcast notice to mariners for advisories.

W-517 is activated south of latitude 12° 40' 00"N. Santa Rosa Reef and Galvez Banks are open for public use.

The general location of the training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla will be in a 12-nautical mile radius of the island. ***(PR)***

Free business seminar for veterans & spouses

The CNMI Military/Veteran's Affairs Office and the Small Business Development Center will be offering a free business seminar called "Reboot to Business" at Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan's Azucena Room on March 26, from 9am to 4pm, presented by Dennis Kwak, director, Veterans Business Outreach Center of the Pacific. To register, contact Velma Del Rosario at 664-2650 or visit https://sbavets.force.com/s/. ***(PR)***

Art-in-the-Park at the AMP

In March and April, the American Memorial Park is partnering with artists and organizations to provide free art classes to the community under the 2nd annual Art-in-the-Park series. All ages are welcome.

There will be banana painting with Joy Rankin Santos on March 10, from 9am to 12pm. The Carolinian Affairs Office will teach beading on March 24, from 9am to 12pm. Kimberly Mendiola will teach watercolor painting on April 7, from 9am to 12pm.

At the end of the art sessions, on April 21, artwork will be displayed at the Visitor Center for the National Park Week. Space is limited so register soon! To register for a class, visit the American Memorial Park Visitor Center. The center is open daily from 9am to 5pm. For questions contact ranger Brooke Nevitt or education specialist Jovanna Mafnas at 234-7207x2020 or email brooke_nevitt@nps.gov. ***(NPS)***

SCC now accepting scholarship applications

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce is now accepting applications for its Educational Scholarship Fund. Hard copies of the Chamber scholarship applications are available at the Chamber office and can also be delivered to schools upon request. Applicants are encouraged to complete the application which are due on or before 5pm on Friday, April 20, 2018, at its office in the Marianas Business Plaza, third floor, Suite 315. The scholarships will be awarded at the Chamber's monthly general membership meeting on June 6, 2018. Chamber scholarship applications are also available on the website, www.saipanchamber.com. For more information call the Chamber office at (670) 234-7150 or email administrator@saipanchamber.com. ***(PR)***

Business

Trump economic aide Cohn leaves

WASHINGTON (AP)—Top economic adviser Gary Cohn is leaving the White House after breaking with President Donald Trump on trade policy, the latest in a string of high-level departures from the West Wing.

Cohn

Cohn, the director of the National Economic Council, has been the leading internal opponent to Trump's planned tariffs on imports of steel and aluminum, working to orchestrate an eleventh-hour effort in recent days to get Trump to reverse course. But Trump resisted those efforts, and reiterated Tuesday he will be imposing tariffs in the coming days.

Cohn's departure comes amid a period of unparalleled tumult in the Trump administration, and aides worry that more staffers may soon head for the doors.

The announcement came hours after Trump denied there was chaos in the White House. Trump maintained that his White House has "tremendous energy," but multiple White House officials said Trump has been urging anxious aides to stay.

"Everyone wants to work in the White House," Trump said during a joint press conference with Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven. "They all want a piece of the Oval Office."

In a statement, Cohn said it was his honor to serve in the administration and "enact pro-growth economic policies to benefit the American people."

Trump praised Cohn despite the disagreement on trade, issuing a statement saying Cohn has "served his country with great distinction."

Cohn is a former Goldman Sachs executive who joined the White House after departing the Wall Street firm with a $285 million payout. He played a pivotal role in helping Trump enact a sweeping tax overhaul, coordinating with members of Congress.

Cohn's departure is a blow to Capitol Hill Republicans and business groups who were hoping Trump might listen to their worries on tariffs—and that Cohn would serve as a moderating force as the administration pushes a renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Earlier Tuesday, House Speaker Paul Ryan had said talks with the White House were "ongoing" and he was "encouraged" that the White House would adjust course.

"I hate to see Gary go," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell told The Associated Press.

Sen. Pat Toomey, R-Pa., who is trying to persuade the administration to target the steel and aluminum tariffs as narrowly as possible, acknowledged his side of the argument was increasingly outnumbered in the administration.

As Trump weighs tariff, US steelmakers see profits

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Trump administration has chosen an odd time to offer special protection to the U.S. steel industry.

As President Donald Trump prepares to impose a 25 percent tax on imported steel, America's steelmakers are actually faring pretty well: The U.S. steel industry last year earned more than $2.8 billion, up from $714 million in 2016 and a loss in 2015, according to the Commerce Department. And the industry added more than 8,000 jobs between January 2017 and January 2018.

Even before Trump mentioned the tariff last Thursday, the price of the benchmark U.S.-made hot-rolled steel had reached the highest level since May 2011, according to S&P Global Platts. The price surged even higher on the tariff news.

"We finished 2017 in a good position. We look forward to 2018," U.S. Steel CEO David Burritt told industry analysts Feb. 1, according to a transcript at the website Seeking Alpha. He continued: "We're seeing increased demand from our customers and have rescheduled some projects to ensure that we can make enough steel to support our customers' needs."

Still, the steel companies complain they're victims of unfair foreign competition.

"The industry isn't doing as bad as their press releases say it is," says steel analyst Charles Bradford, president of Bradford Research. "Any time world economic growth is over 3 percent, the steel industry usually does OK." The International Monetary Fund says the global economy grew 3.7 percent last year and expects it to grow 3.9 percent in 2018.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Amazon CEO's wealth soars to new heights while Trump's sinks

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos has become the first $100 billion mogul to top Forbes' annual rankings of the world's richest people. But President Donald Trump's fortune sank during his first year in office despite a surging stock market. The Bezos milestone, revealed in Tuesday's release of Forbes' closely watched list , underscores the growing clout of both Bezos and the company that he founded in 1994 as an online bookstore. Forbes› breakdown provided further evidence that serving as president isn›t the most lucrative job, even when most of the rich are getting richer. All told, the world now holds more than 2,200 billionaires with a combined fortune of $9.1 trillion, up 18 percent from ago, according to Forbes' calculations. Although Trump is part of that elite group, he saw his fortune sink by about $400 million to $3.1 billion during his first year in office.

Investor group cancels deal to buy Weinstein Co.

NEW YORK (AP)—A group of investors pulled out of a deal to buy the beleaguered Weinstein Co. on Tuesday after discovering tens of millions of dollars in undisclosed debt, according to people familiar with the negotiations. Businesswoman Maria Contreras-Sweet, who has been leading the group of buyers along with billionaire investor Ron Burkle, said in a statement that "disappointing information about the viability of completing this transaction" had led her to call off the sale. She didn't offer further details.

Finance minister says China can handle government debt risks

BEIJING (AP)—China's finance minister has tried to defuse concern over the country's rising debt, saying government borrowing is below danger levels and regulators can prevent financial system risks. Xiao Jie's comments Wednesday follow Beijing's criticism last year of global rating agencies that cut its credit rating due to China's total government and corporate debt burden. The minister said government debt at the end of 2017 declined slightly from a year earlier as a percentage of annual economic output. Xiao made no mention of corporate borrowing that makes up most of a total Chinese debt burden estimated to have risen to 270 percent of gross domestic product, high for a developing country. The minister said by following debt and budget rules, "we are fully able to ensure there is no systemic risk."

Nation

Calif. sued over sanctuary laws

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Trump administration on Tuesday sued to block California laws that extend protections to people living in the U.S. illegally, the most aggressive move yet in its push to force so-called sanctuary cities and states to cooperate with immigration authorities. California officials remained characteristically defiant, vowing to defend their landmark legislation.

The Justice Department argued a trio of state laws that, among other things, bar police from asking people about their citizenship status or participating in federal immigration enforcement activities are unconstitutional and have kept federal agents from doing their jobs. The lawsuit named as defendants the state of California, Gov. Jerry Brown and Attorney General Xavier Becerra.

"I say, bring it on," said California Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de Leon, a Los Angeles Democrat who wrote the sanctuary state bill.

It is the latest salvo in an escalating feud between the Trump administration and California, which has resisted the president on issues like taxes and marijuana policy and defiantly refuses to help federal agents detain and deport undocumented immigrants. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has said it will increase its presence in California, and Attorney General Jeff Sessions wants to cut off funding to jurisdictions that won't cooperate.

The lawsuit was filed as the Justice Department is also reviewing Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf's decision to warn of an immigration sweep in advance, which ICE said allowed hundreds of immigrants to elude detention. Schaaf said Tuesday the city would "continue to inform all residents about their constitutional rights."

A man works on a power pole, Tuesday, March 6, 2018, in Watertown, Mass. AP

Snow, wind threaten new outages

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Utility workers took advantage of milder temperatures and sunshine Tuesday in their scramble to restore power to thousands of customers around the Northeast, as another snowy, blowy nor'easter threatened a new round of outages.

The National Weather Service issued a winter storm warning that stretched from eastern Pennsylvania to most of New England, from late Tuesday night into Thursday morning.

Heavy, wet snow and gusting winds could take down trees and snap power lines already weakened from last week's storm, adding to stress for customers who've gone days without power.

The outages turned to outrage for a New Jersey man whose home had been without electricity since Friday, who threatened to kidnap a utility company employee and blow up a substation. Robert Winter, 63, was charged with making terroristic threats, according to police in Vernon.

More than a foot of snow is forecast for some interior areas, the weather service said. Pennsylvania's Poconos Mountains and parts of western Massachusetts could see up to 18 inches.

Damaging winds are in the forecast with gusts of up to 60 mph at Cape Cod, 45 mph at the Jersey shore and 30 mph around suburban Philadelphia.

Depending on the storm's track, communities along the Interstate 95 corridor could see either lots of rain, heavy snow, or a mix of each.

Transportation departments in Philadelphia and Boston loaded up salt trucks and pre-treated roads Tuesday afternoon, and some airlines already were waiving ticket change fees for airports in the storm's projected path, such as Newark, Philadelphia, Boston and New York's JFK.

Amtrak said it was canceling some train service Wednesday, and regional rail trains in Philadelphia will operate on a weekend schedule on Wednesday.

School districts and municipal operations around Pennsylvania and Connecticut already were announcing they would close Wednesday. New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy and Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf declared states of emergency.

The National Weather Service said travel is not recommended Wednesday and urged people to stay off the roads to allow emergency crews and clean-up crews to do their jobs. Some areas will get as much as 2-3 inches an hour.

Workers in a coastal Massachusetts town hit particularly hard by last week's nor'easter were working frantically to head off further damage from another severe storm coming this week.

Public works crews and private contractors in Duxbury reinforced the town's crumbling seawall with truckloads of large rocks on Tuesday, but Department of Public Works Director Pete Buttkus called it a short-term fix.

Rene Read, town manager of the community about 30 miles (48 kilometers) south of Boston, said the seawall "is in crisis and is in the process of failing."

Asia

Slain Filipina shows risks to OFWs

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—When Joanna Demafelis' indebted family needed money to fix their typhoon-battered home, she followed in the footsteps of millions of other Filipinos and left to find work overseas. And like far too many Filipinos, her journey ended in tragedy.

Demafelis' mutilated body was found last month inside a freezer in an abandoned apartment in Kuwait, where she worked as a housemaid for a Lebanese man and his Syrian wife. She had likely been dead for more than a year.

Demafelis' flower-draped coffin sat Friday in her family home in rural Sara town in central Iloilo province, where relatives, who had alerted authorities in 2016 that she was missing, honored her memory and called for justice.

"We'll miss her. She was so kind to all of us," her brother Joejet Demafelis said, adding hundreds of relatives and friends came on the eve of her burial.

Her slaying is the latest tragedy to befall an overseas worker from the Philippines, where about a tenth of the nation's 100 million people toil in more than 200 countries worldwide to provide for families back home. Last year, those workers sent home more than $31 billion, accounting for 10 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

Officials warn Demafelis' death won't be the last. They say a dangerous mix of poverty, spotty enforcement of labor laws, difficult conditions especially in Arab nations, and the logistical nightmare of watching over huge numbers of workers abroad means other tragedies are inevitable.

"You gnash your teeth and ask 'Why is this happening?'" Sen. Franklin Drilon, a former labor secretary, said in an interview, adding that laws meant to protect workers needed to be enforced. "Certainly, it can happen again."

President Rodrigo Duterte has responded to Demafelis' death by banning the deployment of Filipino workers to Kuwait, though that won't affect the more than 250,000 Filipinos still working in the oil-rich nation. The Philippine senate, meanwhile, has opened an inquiry into what went wrong.

The president, who is prone at making public outbursts, also lashed out at Middle East nations.

"The Filipino is no slave to anyone, anywhere and everywhere," an enraged Duterte said shortly after Demafelis' body was found. "We send to you a Filipino worker, hale and hearty ... do not give us back a battered worker or a mutilated corpse."

But deaths among the army of Filipino workers abroad aren't new. Nearly 200 Filipino workers died in Kuwait over the last two years, mostly due to health reasons, but 22 cases were suicides or fatal criminal attacks, said Hans Cacdac, head of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration in Manila.

Cacdac said 45,000 to 50,000 "distress cases" are reported each year, many of them in Arab countries.

The sixth of nine children of a poor farmer, Demafelis did not go to college and flew to Kuwait in 2014. She had wanted to earn money to repair the family house, which was battered by Typhoon Haiyan the year before, reacquire a small piece of farmland that had been mortgaged, and help pay tuition for a sibling to finish a criminology course.

"Those were her dreams that prompted her to leave," her elder brother Joejet Demafelis told The Associated Press.

For more than a century Filipinos have been doing the same. Under American colonial rule in the early 1900s, Filipinos traveled to work on pineapple plantations in Hawaii and later in fish canneries in Alaska and elsewhere on the mainland until entry restrictions eased the exodus.

In the 1970s, a construction boom in the Middle East lured more workers out of the Philippines, which had heightened political and economic uncertainties under then President Ferdinand Marcos. The Philippines labor export policy at the time addressed unemployment at home and generated badly needed foreign exchange to bolster the economy.

As the number of workers climbed, so did incidents that strained Philippine ties with host countries, such as abuse of Filipinos at the hands of employers or Filipinos committing crimes.

A 1995 case in which a Filipina housemaid was convicted of murder and executed in Singapore despite her pleas of innocence, prompted outrage in Manila and fresh legislation meant to set a higher standard of protection for workers, their families and Filipinos in distress. Countries of destination needed to be able to guarantee the rights of workers by having signed agreements with the Philippines.

The law also set a policy that the country would "as soon as practicable" allow only skilled workers to be deployed overseas and would try to wean the country off of dependence on the earnings of migrant workers.

The law has clearly had mixed results and officials acknowledge that Demafelis fell through the cracks in its safety nets.

Demafelis' calls to her family were brief and scant and she did not mention any problem, according to her sister Joyce Demafelis. When she stopped calling in 2016, her family started to get worried and notified authorities in December that year, Joejet Demafelis said.

He said authorities did not take adequate steps to find out what happened.

Inquiries about Demafelis were passed on to a Filipino labor officer in Kuwait but the officer was too overwhelmed with complaints, Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III said.

"I asked why no action was taken and I was told it was humanly impossible to attend to them ... there was too much work," Bello said, adding he did not accept that excuse and recalled the Kuwait-based officer and two others.

Demafelis' employers have reportedly been arrested, though few details surrounding her slaying are known, including when and how she was killed.

Unlike professionals who work in offices, housemaids are particularly vulnerable to abuse given that they work in the privacy of homes out of sight of authorities, said Bernard Olalia, who heads the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, which regulates the deployment of Filipinos abroad.

In some countries, such as Kuwait, employers often keep the passports and cellphones of their maids to prevent them from fleeing, but it also cuts them off from their families and other support systems, Olalia said.

An option the government is considering is to ban Filipina maids from being deployed but continue allowing professionals to seek jobs abroad, Olalia said.

Amid the outrage over Demafelis' death, Philippine labor officials have pledged to shoulder the repair of her family's house, where relatives were preparing for her funeral Saturday. The government will also send her sibling through college and finance the reacquisition of her family's farmland.

"We wish all of these would have happened," Joejet Demafelis said. "But never at the cost of her life."

World

In this file photo dated Sunday, 9 March 2014, a Vietnamese air force aircraft AN-26 is seen at a base in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Russia›s Defense Ministry says an AN-26 Russian military cargo plane of the same type has crashed in Syria, killing 32 people onboard. AP

Plane crash in Syria kills 39

BEIRUT (AP)—A Russian military cargo plane crashed near an air base in Syria on Tuesday, killing all 39 Russian servicemen on board in a blow to Russian operations in Syria. The Russian military quickly insisted the plane was not shot down and blamed the crash on a technical error.

Meanwhile, shelling near the rebel-held eastern suburbs of Damascus killed dozens of people over the past 24 hours as President Bashar Assad's government, supported by the Russian military, pushed its assault on the capital's rebel-held suburbs. International aid workers on a rare humanitarian mission inside the besieged area described dramatic scenes of rescuers trying to pull corpses from the rubble of buildings and children who hadn't seen daylight in 15 days.

The mission on Monday to the area known as eastern Ghouta was cut short after the government shelling escalated while the aid workers were still inside, calling into question future aid shipments to the encircled region, the last major opposition stronghold near the capital.

Opposition activists and a war monitor said 80 people were killed Monday—the deadliest day since the U.N. Security Council demanded a 30-day cease-fire for Syria—and at least nine were killed Tuesday.

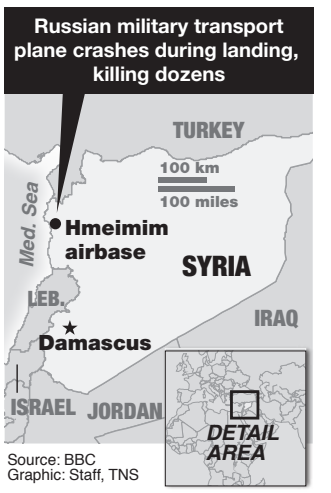
U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged all parties to implement a cease-fire demanded by the Security Council on Feb. 24 and allow "safe and unimpeded access" for convoys to deliver aid to hundreds of thousands of Syrians in desperate need.

Guterres descried that attacks on eastern Ghouta reportedly killed more than 100 people Monday and that 14 of 46 trucks in a convoy trying to deliver supplies to Douma in eastern Ghouta weren't able to fully unload, U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

Dujarric said nearly half of the food carried on the convoy could not be delivered.

"People were telling us very desperate stories. They are tired, they are angry. They don't want aid, what they want is the shelling to stop," Pawel Krzysiek, head of communications for the Syrian branch of the International Committee of the Red Cross, said Tuesday.

He said thousands of families were huddled in underground shelters, reluctant to eat in front of each other because of the pervasive hunger, and children who watched as aid workers tried to pull corpses from the rubble.



"No child should be witnessing this in their very early state of development. But the children of Douma and the children of eastern Ghouta unfortunately do, and that's what makes the situation very, very dramatic," he said.

Monday's aid shipment was the first to enter eastern Ghouta amid weeks of a crippling siege and a government assault that has killed some 800 civilians since Feb. 18. Aid agencies said Syrian authorities removed basic health supplies, including trauma and surgical kits and insulin, from the convoys before they set off.

The U.N. said airstrikes and shelling in eastern Ghouta continued for hours while the convoy was unloading supplies.

"After nearly nine hours inside, the decision was made to leave for security reasons and to avoid jeopardizing the safety of humanitarian teams on the ground," said Jens Laerke, deputy spokesperson for the U.N.'s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. As a result, 14 of the 46 trucks in the convoy were not able to fully offload critical humanitarian supplies.

Laerke said the team found a desperate situation for people who have endured months without access to humanitarian aid. "Food for civilians was in short supply or prohibitively expensive and high rates of acute malnutrition were observed," he said.

Krzysiek said there was "no electricity so it was extremely dark and we had to go. But we left with heavy hearts because we knew that we are leaving people behind, we know what they will be going through."

The violence called into question future aid deliveries. Another aid convoy is scheduled to enter eastern Ghouta on Thursday, but Laerke said security measures must be guaranteed for this to happen.

Pro-government forces have made swift gains since launching their offensive, seizing roughly 40 percent of eastern Ghouta territory in two weeks, according to the Britain-based Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group, and setting off a wave of displacement as civilians flee strikes and advancing forces.

Airstrikes continued Tuesday. The opposition's Syrian Civil Defense search-and-rescue group reported at least nine people were killed in airstrikes on the town of Jisreen. The group, also known as the White Helmets, said two of its volunteers, and 28 others, suffered difficulties breathing following shelling on the town of Hammouriyeh on Monday evening. It accused the government of using "poison gas." The Observatory reported 18 people suffered breathing difficulties, without attributing a cause.

Focus

In this Monday, March 5, 2018 photo, provided by the North Korean government on March 6, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, front right, shakes hands with South Korean National Security Director Chung Eui-yong after Chung gave Kim the letter from South Korean President Moon Jae-in, in Pyongyang, North Korea. Independent journalists were not given access to cover the event depicted in this image distributed by the North Korean government. The content of this image is as provided and cannot be independently verified.

AP

Kim Jong Un gets a new image: Statesman

By FOSTER KLUG
ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korean leader Kim Jong Un grins, just on the verge of a belly laugh, as he grasps the hand of a visiting South Korean official. He sits at a wide conference table and beams as the envoys look on deferentially. He smiles broadly again at dinner, his wife at his side, the South Koreans seeming to hang on his every word.

Kim is used to being the center of gravity in a country that his family has ruled with unquestioned power since 1948, but the chance to play the senior statesman on the Korean Peninsula with a roomful of visiting South Koreans has afforded the autocratic leader a whole new raft of propaganda and political opportunities. He'll get another major chance to shine next month: Seoul says that Kim has agreed to hold a summit meeting—the rivals' third-ever—with South Korean President Moon Jae-in.

The photos released by North Korean state media on Tuesday showing Kim meeting with Moon's envoys on Monday evening are all the more remarkable coming just months after a barrage of North Korean weapons tests and threats against Seoul and Washington had many fearing war.

Kim can be seen in a North Korean TV video smiling and laughing, proposing a toast at the dinner reception, and waving as two limousines carrying the South Korean delegates left the main building of the ruling Workers' Party.

The extraordinary images spread rapidly across the southern part of the peninsula a day after the North said Kim had an "openhearted talk" with 10 envoys for Moon. Kim reportedly expressed his desire to "write a new history of national reunification" during a dinner that the South Korean government said lasted about four hours.

The meeting marked the first time South Korean officials have met with the young North Korean leader in person since he took power after his dictator father's death in late 2011. It's the latest sign that the Koreas are trying to mend ties after one of the tensest years in a region that seems to be permanently on edge. The South Korean delegation led by presidential national security director Chung Eui-yong returned to the South on Tuesday and announced the Kim-Moon summit planned for next month. Chung's trip was the first known high-level visit by South Korean officials to the North in about a decade.

North Korea hasn't announced the summit agreement in its own media, more than a half-day after the South's announcement.

Given the robust history of bloodshed, threats and animosity on the Korean Peninsula, there is considerable skepticism over whether the Koreas' apparent warming relations will lead to lasting peace. North Korea, some believe, is trying to use improved ties with the South to weaken U.S.-led international sanctions and pressure, and to provide domestic propaganda fodder for Kim.

But each new development—and especially a summit—raises the possibility that the rivals can use the momentum from the good feelings created during North Korea's participation in the South's Pyeongchang Winter Olympics last month to ease a standoff over North Korea's nuclear ambitions and restart talks between the North and the United States. Seoul said the North also agreed during the talks to impose a moratorium on nuclear and missile tests if Pyongyang holds talks with Washington.

The role of a confident leader welcoming visiting, and lower-ranking, officials from the rival South is one Kim clearly relishes. Smiling for cameras, he posed during the meeting with the South Koreans and presided over what was described by the North's official Korean Central News Agency as a "co-patriotic and sincere atmosphere."

Many in Seoul and Washington will want to know if, the rhetoric and smiling images notwithstanding, there's any possibility Kim will negotiate over North Korea's breakneck pursuit of an arsenal of nuclear missiles that can viably target the U.S. mainland.

The North has repeatedly and bluntly declared it will not give up its nuclear bombs. It also hates the annual U.S.-South Korean military exercises that were postponed because of the Olympics but will likely happen later this spring. And achieving its nuclear aims rests on the North resuming tests of missiles and bombs that set the region on edge.

Kim was said to have expressed at the dinner his "firm will to vigorously advance the north-south relations and write a new history of national reunification by the concerted efforts of our nation to be proud of in the world."

There is speculation that better inter-Korean ties could pave the way for Washington and Pyongyang to talk about the North's nuclear weapons. The United States, however, has made clear that it doesn't want empty talks and that all options, including military measures, are on the table.

Previous warming ties between the Koreas have come to nothing amid North Korea's repeated weapons tests and the North's claims that the annual U.S.-South Korean war games are a rehearsal for an invasion.

Korean summit a rite of passage for Kim Jong Un

TOKYO (AP)—More than six years after assuming power, North Korea's Kim Jong Un has yet to complete one of the defining rituals of a world leader—hosting another head of state, or being welcomed by one on an official visit abroad.

That may change soon.

South Korea's presidential office said Tuesday evening the two countries had agreed to hold a summit next month at a truce village inside the Demilitarized Zone that divides their countries. And they plan to do so on the South's side of the village, which would be a first.

Kim's meeting this week with a high-level delegation from Seoul to hash out his proposal for a summit with South Korean President Moon Jae-in points both to some savvy political maneuvering and possibly a broader attempt by Kim to step more firmly out from the shadows of his predecessors as North Korea's undisputed supreme leader.

Kim already seems to be perfecting the optics of what he hopes will be ahead.

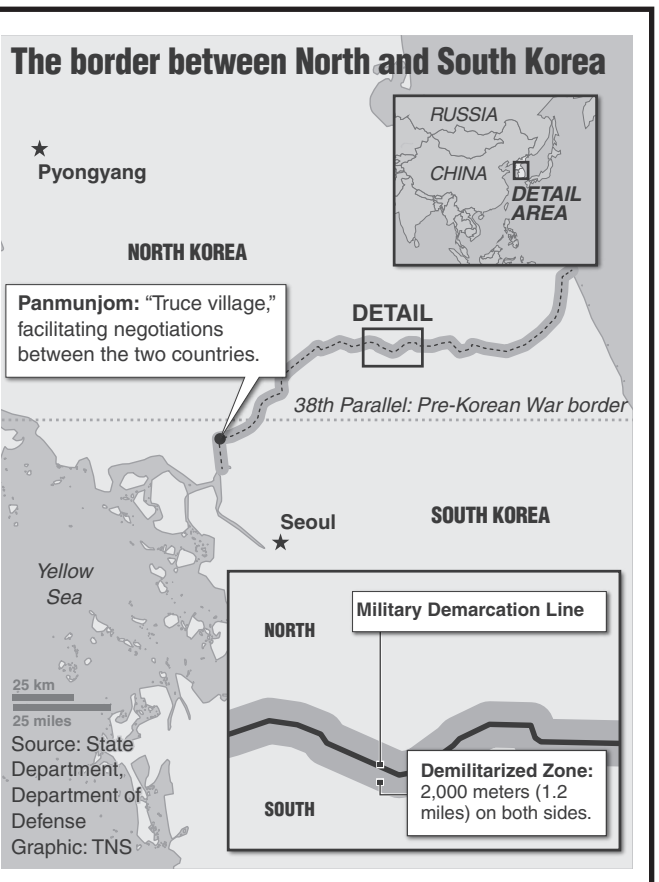
While the South Koreans were in Pyongyang, Kim seemed to cherish a role he rarely gets to take—that of a magnanimous head of state welcoming important foreign guests. North Korea's state-run media made a point of portraying him as a confident statesman, holding court over a lavish dinner, beaming with satisfaction during group photos and congratulating South Korea for successfully staging the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics.

That's quite a dramatic departure from the predominant images of 2017—Kim surrounded by his generals celebrating their latest missile launch.

The North-South summit itself isn't without precedent. Kim's father, Kim Jong Il, met his South Korean counterparts in 2000 and 2007. Both of those summits were held in Pyongyang, however.

To show just how important such a meeting is to him, Kim sent his younger sister to make the pitch directly to Moon last month, when she attended the opening ceremony of the Olympics. Her visit marked the first time a member of the Kim family had ever crossed the border.

Make no mistake—Kim is sticking to his nuclear weapons and arsenal of missiles capable of reaching the U.S. mainland. While he may hold off on any new missile or nuclear tests for the time being, as Seoul has indicated, he has said repeatedly that he has no intention of giving them up or of using them as a bargaining chip to improve ties with Seoul, Washington or anybody else.



After a year of dangerously high tensions between his regime and the administra-

See KOREAN on Next Page

Environment

Trump administration once again lifts elephant trophy ban

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Trump administration has quietly decided once again to allow Americans to import the body parts of African elephants shot for sport, despite presidential tweets decrying the practice as a "horror show."

President Donald Trump personally intervened in November when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service first said it would lift an Obama-era ban on elephants imported from Zimbabwe and Zambia. The agency contends that encouraging wealthy big-game hunters to kill the threatened species would help raise money for conservation programs.

"Big-game trophy decision will be announced next week but will be very hard pressed to change my mind that this horror show in any way helps conservation of Elephants or any other animal," Trump tweeted on Nov. 19, placing the policy on hold after a public backlash to the earlier decision.

More than three months later, the federal agency overseen by Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke issued a letter dated March 1 announcing that the importation of elephant trophies will now be approved on a "case-by-case basis." The letter cites a December ruling in a long-running lawsuit challenging the ban filed by Safari Club International and the lobbying arm of the National Rifle Association.

In this March 9, 2010, file photo, elephants use their trunks to smell for possible danger in the Tsavo East national park, Kenya. The Trump administration has quietly decided once again to allow Americans to import the body parts of African elephants shot for sport, despite presidential tweets decrying the practice as a "horror show." AP

Zinke recently told people privately that Trump has called him several times to discuss what to do about elephant trophies. Nether the Interior Department nor Fish and Wildlife issued a media release over the last week to announce the decision, which was quickly condemned by environmental advocates.

"The Trump administration is trying to keep these crucial trophy import decisions behind closed doors, and that's totally unacceptable," said Tanya Sanerib, international legal director at the Center for Biological Diversity. "Elephants aren't meant to be trophies, they're meant to roam free."

Trump's two adult sons are trophy hunters. A photo of Donald Trump Jr. holding a knife and the bloody severed tail of an elephant he reportedly killed in Zimbabwe in 2011 has sparked outrage among animal rights activists.

Zinke is an avid hunter who after arriving at Interior last year ordered the arcade game "Big Buck Hunter Pro" to be installed in the employee cafeteria at the agency's Washington headquarters, a move he said would promote wildlife and habitat conservation.

In June, the department removed longstanding protections for grizzly bears near Yellowstone National Park, a step to potentially allow them to be hunted. The Fish and Wildlife Service also quietly began issuing permits in October allowing African lions killed in Zimbabwe and Zambia to be imported. Previously, only wild lions killed in South Africa were eligible.

The world's largest land mammal, the African elephant has been classified as threatened under the U.S. Endangered Species Act since 1979. A licensed two-week African elephant hunt can cost more than $50,000 per person, not including airfare, according to advertised rates.

Illicit demand for elephant ivory has led to devastating losses from illegal poaching as the natural habitat available for the animals to roam has also dwindled by more than half. As a result, the number of African elephants has shrunk from about 5 million a century ago to about 400,000 remaining. And that number continues to decline each year.

KOREAN

From Page 19

tion of U.S. President Donald Trump, Kim is clearly hoping to woo Seoul away from Washington's hard line of "maximum pressure." He is also looking to improved ties with the South as a potential means of keeping the North's economy afloat.

But his recent moves seem to go a step beyond that.

Even without any lasting political breakthroughs, a summit would mark a major personal milestone for Kim, who while being the epicenter of great international anxiety is still known to the world almost exclusively through images and statements that are carefully filtered through North Korea's state-run propaganda machine.

With the five-year official mourning period for his father now over, and his personal powerbase seemingly strong, holding a summit would offer Kim a chance to solidify his bona fides as a national leader and bolster his stature in comparison with the legacies of his grandfather, "eternal president" Kim Il Sung, and father, Kim Jong Il.

How far beyond a summit with South Korea Kim is willing or able to go remains to be seen. Moon is pushing for the North to reopen talks with the U.S. and his agreement to hold a summit with Kim indicates more developments on that front are in the offing. Seoul has said its next move is to brief American officials.

Trips abroad can be a risky proposition if a leader isn't entirely certain stability can be maintained while he is away.

Even so, both of Kim's predecessors traveled outside North Korea's borders during their tenures—Kim Il Sung famously visited the Soviet Union and most of eastern Europe by train in 1984. Kim Jong Un himself has been abroad, having attended school as a boy in Switzerland, and rumors have come up from time to time that he would visit either Beijing or Moscow.

If nothing else, Kim does have an aircraft that's ready for the task.

Kim's younger sister, Kim Yo Jong, flew to the South for the Olympics on an aircraft believed to be Kim Jong Un's personal jet, which was decked out to resemble the kind of plane other national leaders use for state trips. That seemed designed to suggest Kim, like any other political leader, could be ready to hop on a flight if the opportunity arose.

Not that he will likely need to do so anytime soon. No one is talking yet of a trip by Kim to Seoul.

Relations with Beijing have soured under his watch and while ties with Moscow are relatively better, Russian President Vladimir Putin's attention seems to be focused elsewhere. And despite Trump's casual remarks otherwise, a journey to Washington would definitely seem like a longshot.

But then again, a year ago, so did the chances of a summit with South Korea's leader.

US oil expected to meet most of world's growth in demand

HOUSTON (AP)—A global energy group says booming production in the United States will meet most of the world's growth in demand for oil in the next few years.

The International Energy Agency believes U.S. oilfields will offset slow growth from the OPEC cartel.

The group, based in Paris, issued its annual oil market report on Monday. The resurgence in U.S. production is the most prominent change since the group's last forecast.

The agency continues to worry that globally, investment in new production has not rebounded from the oil-price plunge that started in mid-2014, raising the possibility of future shortages and price spikes.

The IEA predicts that within five years, the cushion of production capacity over expected demand will fall to its lowest level since 2007. That was the year before the price for oil in the U.S. surged close to $150. Prices are less than half that today.

The energy agency, which advises energy-consuming countries, said Monday that global energy demand will grow about 7 percent by 2023, to 104.7 million barrels of oil per day. Citing the production capabilities of drillers operating in U.S. shale fields, the world capacity to produce oil will hit 107 million barrels a day.

The strongest growth is expected to come from the Permian Basin, a vast oil and gas pool that lies under parts of Texas and New Mexico. Output there is expected to double by 2023.

The energy group forecasts that the U.S. will supply enough oil to meet 80 percent of the growing demand over the next three years, and Canada, Brazil and Norway will meet the rest.

All that U.S. production should keep prices at the pump from rising. The energy group's director, Fatih Birol, said the study assumed oil prices around $60 a barrel, which is just below the current international benchmark price of $65.64 a barrel.

Meanwhile, the energy agency has scaled back its forecast of output from OPEC, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, a sign of the United States' ascendancy in energy.

For more than a year, OPEC and other producers including Russia have limited production, a strategy that helped boost crude prices. Benchmark crude has roughly doubled since bottoming in early 2016.

The rebound, however, also spurred more drilling in the U.S., where operators found success in shale formations stretching from Texas to North Dakota to the Northeast. And with U.S. production expected to keep surging, OPEC's caps may prove less effective in boosting prices.

Speaking at the CERAWeek IHS Markit conference on Monday, OPEC Secretary General Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo sidestepped questions about the cartel's next steps. A decision on extending the production limits beyond this year will be made at meetings in June and November, he said.

OPEC representatives planned to meet Monday night with executives from some of the U.S. shale producers—a follow-up to an ice-breaking meeting on the sidelines of the same conference a year ago.

Life & Style

Porn star sues Trump over nondisclosure agreement

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A porn star who has said she had sex with President Donald Trump filed a lawsuit Tuesday seeking to invalidate a nondisclosure agreement that she signed days before the 2016 presidential election, which prevented her from discussing the alleged sexual encounters.

The lawsuit, filed in Los Angeles County Superior Court, alleges that the agreement is "null and void and of no consequence" because Trump didn't personally sign it.

AP

In this Feb. 11, 2007, file photo, adult film actress Stormy Daniels arrives for the 49th Annual Grammy Awards in Los Angeles.

Adult film actress Stormy Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, said she wanted to go public with the details of her alleged sexual relationship with Trump in the weeks leading up to the election, according to the lawsuit. Clifford and Trump's attorney Michael Cohen signed the nondisclosure agreement on Oct. 28, 2016.

Clifford alleges that she began an "intimate relationship" with Trump in 2006 and that it continued "well into the year 2007," according to the lawsuit. She said the relationship included encounters in Lake Tahoe, Nevada, and Beverly Hills, California.

Trump married his current wife, Melania Trump, in 2005.

Clifford has claimed she had sex with Trump once and then carried on a subsequent yearslong platonic relationship. She has also, through a lawyer, denied the two had an affair. Cohen has denied there was ever an affair.

Cohen has said he paid the porn actress $130,000 out of his own pocket as part of the agreement. He has also said that "neither the Trump Organization nor the Trump campaign was a party to the transaction with Ms. Clifford, and neither reimbursed me for the payment, either directly or indirectly."

The lawsuit charges that the "hush agreement" is legally invalid because it was only signed by Clifford and Cohen. The agreement refers to Trump as David Dennison and Clifford as Peggy Peterson, but an attached exhibit details their true identities.

Clifford's lawsuit also alleges that Trump and Cohen "aggressively sought to silence Ms. Clifford as part of an effort to avoid her telling the truth, thus helping to ensure he won the Presidential Election."

"To be clear, the attempts to intimidate Ms. Clifford into silence and 'shut her up' in order to 'protect Mr. Trump' continue unabated," the lawsuit said. Clifford alleges that as recently as last week, Trump's attorney tried to initiate an arbitration proceeding against her.

Man charged with felony theft of Frances McDormand's Oscar

AP

Frances McDormand, winner of the award for best performance by an actress in a leading role for "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri", attends the Governors Ball after the Oscars on Sunday, March 4, 2018, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A 47-year-old man was charged Tuesday with stealing Frances McDormand's Academy Award at an Oscars after-party.

Los Angeles County prosecutors said that Terry Bryant was charged with one felony count of grand theft for stealing the statuette McDormand won for best actress for her performance in "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri" on Sunday night.

Bryant faces up to three years in prison if convicted. Jail records show that he is still being held on $20,000 bail. It is not clear whether he has retained an attorney who can comment.

Video captured by The Associated Press appears to show Bryant walking with the statuette out of the party, the Governors Ball, the official Oscars after-party, and holding it up proudly to photographers and gawkers waiting outside.

One photographer didn't recognize him as an Oscar winner and followed and confronted him.

Police say Bryant handed back the statuette without a struggle. It was soon returned to McDormand, and Bryant was arrested.

An Instagram account that appears to belong to Bryant also shows him holding a Screen Actors Guild award. A photo and video show him holding a SAG trophy while wearing a tuxedo. In the video he points at the award and says, "I proclaim it in Jesus's name."

A representative for the SAG Awards, asked if there were any trophies reported stolen or missing, said the matter is under investigation.

The account appears to show Bryant at several awards shows and movie premieres, including the Golden Globes and the Grammy Awards, and shows him posing alongside several celebrities including Selena Gomez, Jimmy Kimmel and Mariah Carey.

Newlywed wife rejects idea of welcoming a second wife

DEAR ABBY: I have been married for seven months, and my husband wants a second wife, something I do not agree with. He says he likes helping people and has decided he wants a former lover to be a part of our marriage. Unfortunately, she is more than willing to sleep with him.

Now he's talking about helping her move even though he knows I'm against him having anything to do with her. She says she's going to tell her daughter he is her boyfriend and not let her know he is married. She wants to be my friend, but I want nothing to do with her.

I sold my house, so I have nowhere to go. He refuses to go to marriage counseling because he says I am the problem. I am just about ready to cut my losses and move on. What do you think?

READY TO MOVE ON

DEAR READY: You and your husband are already living on separate planets as far as your values are concerned. Unless you are willing to have an open marriage and another woman sharing your husband, I "think" it's time to talk to a lawyer!

DEAR ABBY: While flying across country with my toddler son, he started screaming hysterically as the plane began its descent. Nothing I could do would calm him. I tried giving him a bottle, a knuckle, a pacifier, even the corner of my shirt, but he continued to howl.

All of a sudden, a hand holding a lollipop appeared in the space between our seats and with it came a soft voice that said, "It's the change in air pressure. Try this." I took what turned out to be a sugar-free lollipop, and sure enough, the moment I unwrapped the generally frowned-upon treat, my son began sucking enthusiastically, calmed down and sat quietly until the plane came to a stop.

Ever since then I travel with sugar-free lollipops in my purse in the event a child near me is undone by the change in cabin pressure during landing. Some parents are skeptical at first, but when I use the tone and the words once spoken to me, they usually accept the treat, calm their child and sigh in relief. I encourage parents of children old enough to handle a lollipop to do the same just in case there is no lollipop angel on their flight.

TIP FROM UP HIGH

DEAR TIP: Hmmm. Perhaps airlines should stock an emergency supply of lollipops on their planes for parents in that situation. It would be easier than handing out earplugs and tranquilizers to all the other passengers on the flight.

DEAR ABBY: My niece died last week from a fentanyl overdose. She was 43. My brother lives out of town, so I offered to retrieve my niece's belongings. While going through them, I found a crack pipe and syringes. Should I tell my brother or keep it to myself?

KEEP IT TO MYSELF

DEAR KEEP IT: Please accept my sympathy for the loss your family has suffered. I think you should tell your brother. He is already aware that his daughter had a serious drug problem. If you're afraid the news will add to his pain, don't be. Disclosing it could help him realize the scope of her addiction.

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

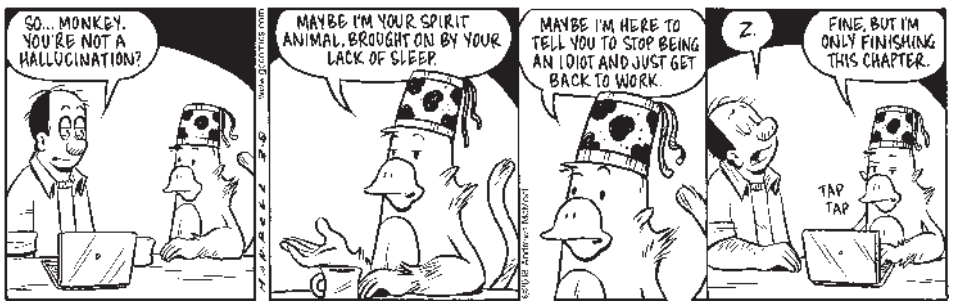
GEE, I'M GETTING MORE LIKE A TIGER EVERY MINUTE.
HOLD STILL WHILE I DRAW STRIPES.
HOW DO I LOOK?
IT'S SOME IMPROVEMENT.
ROWRR RRGHGH RAWRR
I DUNNO, YOU'RE STILL LACKING SOMETHING TIGER-ISH.
PANACHE. THAT'S IT.
WAIT, I'VE GOT SOME PLASTIC VAMPIRE FANGS I CAN PUT IN!

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

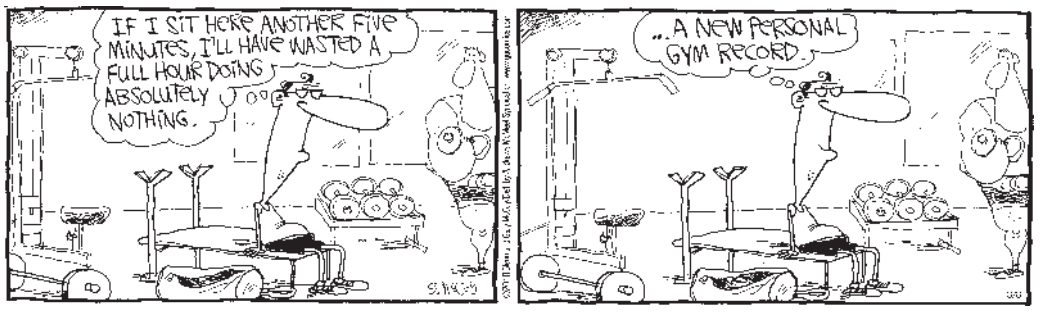
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


SO... MONKEY. YOU'RE NOT A HALLUCINATION?
MAYBE I'M YOUR SPIRIT ANIMAL, BROUGHT ON BY YOUR LACK OF SLEEP.
MAYBE I'M HERE TO TELL YOU TO STOP BEING AN IDIOT AND JUST GET BACK TO WORK.
Z.
FINE, BUT I'M ONLY FINISHING THIS CHAPTER.
TAP TAP

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

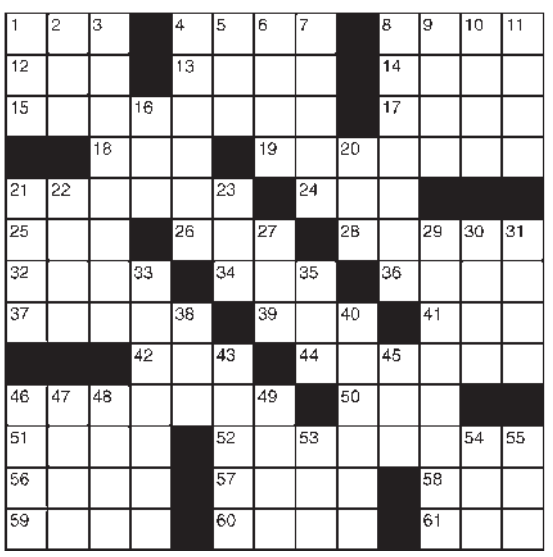
ACROSS
1 And so on (Abbr.)
4 No neatnik
8 Church service
12 Mermaid's home
13 Lake of Lombardy
14 Rapscallions
15 Bach choral works
17 Cash advance
18 Tin Man's need
19 Some beachgoers
21 Neat and stylish
24 Part of NIMBY
25 Mentalist Geller
26 Enervate
28 Boxer's dream
32 On in years
34 Dog's foot
36 Bedouin
37 Also-ran
39 Efron of "Neighbors"
41 Docs' org.
42 London's Old —
44 Fitzgerald title character
46 Urban transport
50 Fan's cry
51 Ticklish Muppet
52 Kingston resident
56 Isaac's eldest
57 Military group
58 Commotion
59 Green shade
60 Kvetches
61 Apprehend

DOWN
1 Computer key
2 Earl Grey, for one
3 Awnings
4 Libra symbols
5 Parking place
6 Yemen neighbor
7 Boatswain, casually
8 Citizen soldiers
9 Book after Joel
10 Lovers' quarrel
11 Taxpayer IDs
16 Gratuity
20 Speck
21 Two-way
22 Jason's ship
23 Knock
27 La —, Bolivia
29 Refuse holder
30 Gentle soul
31 Online auction site
33 Shifty
35 Witty one
38 Rock's Ocasek
40 Gem weights
43 Bayou cuisine
45 — chi
46 Abound
47 Too
48 Present day?
49 Eric of "Troy"
53 "Top Gun" target
54 Nabokov novel
55 San Francisco's — Hill

Solution time: 24 mins.

P	E	P		S	N	O	B		B	O	N	O
A	C	E		C	J	R	.		C	I	A	F
U	R	N		A	N	G	U	S	B	E	F	F
I	U	N	A	R			R	I	B			
			M	A	A	M		P	L	U	M	P
A	R	M	Y	B	R	A	T		E	R	I	E
C	E	O		S	I	R	E	S		G	N	P
R	A	N	T		A	C	A	M	B	E	D	E
E	M	A	I	L		I	S	I	T			
			M	I	A			L	J	N	C	H
A	I	R	B	U	B	B	_	E		A	H	A
	S	E	E		L	E	I	A		I	A	N
U	O	O	R		E	C	I	T		L	I	D

Yesterday's answer 3-8



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: James Van Der Beek, 41; Freddie Prinze Jr., 42; Camryn Manheim, 57; Aidan Quinn, 59.

Happy Birthday: You'll be torn between what you want and what's offered. If you wait around for someone else to help you get ahead, you'll end up back where you started. Take initiative and make every move count. Wheel and deal your way into a position that will encourage you to upgrade your knowledge and skills to meet current demands. Your numbers are 5, 16, 19, 27, 34, 39, 42.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* A financial move can be made and contracts can be negotiated and put in place. Good things will happen if you take the initiative and channel your energy into achieving your goals. Make the purchases necessary to upgrade your lifestyle. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Emotional deception is apparent. If you think someone isn't being honest with you, ask direct questions. Don't feel like you have to pay for someone else's mistakes or make a contribution to something you don't fully believe in. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Personal gains look promising. Focus on partnerships and bringing about positive changes that will encourage you to do your very best. Love is in the stars, and a romantic gesture will improve your relationship with someone special. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Don't believe hearsay. One of your peers or friends will disappoint you. Keep personal information a secret and your passwords and important documents in a safe place. A loss is likely if you are too trusting. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Good things are heading your way. Travel, communication and networking will bring about positive changes to the way you deal with others. You'll have greater opportunities to advance. Improved fitness will lead to a new and improved self-image. ✪✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* A surprise or proposal should be handled carefully. If you are too quick to complain, you may miss out on something special. Listen to what others have to say and decide only after you fully understand what's being offered. ✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* If you can't figure out where you stand with someone, ask. It's better to know what you are up against before you waste too much energy on something that has too many obstacles. Positive change will come from thorough research. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Be careful when dealing with emotional issues. Someone will use the information you share against you. Concentrate on work and the types of changes you can make in order to get more involved in something you enjoy. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Emotions will be difficult to control. Only share your feelings with people you trust. Making plans that will improve your standard of living should be considered. The more hands-on you are, the quicker you'll reach your goal. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Sharing your thoughts with others will lead to questions and concerns. Make a point to iron out any hurdles that have the potential to grow if they are not taken care of soon. Listen, but don't give in to emotional manipulation. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Nothing will happen if you don't take measures to make positive changes. Emotional blackmail and denial can set you back. Look at the possibilities that exist and put together a plan that will improve your life. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Spice up your life. Try something new, but take care of your responsibilities first. Feeling free and clear to follow your dreams will make it much easier to accomplish what you set out to do. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are adventuresome, playful and entertaining. You are progressive and engaging.

To submit astrological questions to the "Dear Eugenia" column, visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

						1	
8			2		4	9	
	1			6	8		
	9	2				3	
		3			8		
	5				4	6	
			5	7		2	
		4	3		2		9
	7						

Difficulty Level ★★★ 3/08

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

9	2	7	5	4	6	3	1	8
6	3	4	1	2	8	5	7	9
1	5	8	3	7	9	6	4	2
8	7	2	9	6	5	4	3	1
5	6	1	4	3	2	9	8	7
3	4	9	8	1	7	2	6	5
4	9	3	2	8	1	7	5	6
2	1	6	7	5	3	8	9	4
7	8	5	6	9	4	1	2	3

Difficulty level ★★★ 3/08

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

ANDREA BOCELLI COLLABORATIONS **Solution: 7 letters**

R	N	O	T	P	P	N	A	R	E	E	H	S	D	E
O	A	I	R	S	A	Z	I	U	Q	Y	V	N	P	S
N	M	C	D	I	A	R	U	A	L	D	A	I	T	O
E	T	I	I	I	T	L	A	L	S	S	U	R	L	R
T	H	S	T	N	O	R	E	D	I	T	A	E	E	N
V	G	U	T	P	O	N	A	E	I	N	A	F	T	E
I	I	M	E	A	E	R	R	P	G	S	I	G	R	E
V	R	Z	N	V	E	T	E	E	Ⓖ	N	E	B	E	I
O	B	R	N	A	S	N	R	V	Ⓝ	T	P	A	Y	V
P	O	W	E	R	S	S	I	E	Ⓘ	O	A	R	A	A
E	F	E	B	O	C	H	J	L	Ⓢ	N	U	B	R	L
R	B	E	R	T	I	A	F	T	E	Y	S	R	P	S
L	E	D	I	T	H	R	A	L	U	C	I	A	N	O
E	A	N	A	I	R	A	I	G	R	A	N	D	E	R
I	V	O	I	C	E	S	P	L	A	C	I	D	O	E

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Ariana, Barbra, Bennett, Berti, Brightman, Celine, Dion, Duet, Edith, Ed Sheeran, E Piu Ti Penso, Eros, Grande, Jennifer, Laura, La Vie En Rose, Live, Lopez, Luciano, Music, Nelly, Paradise, Partiro, Pausini, Pavarotti, Piaf, Placido, Power, Prayer, Quizas, Sarah, Sing, Stage, Strangers, Streisand, Tenor, Time, Tony, Veronica, Vivo Per Lei, Voices

Yesterday's Answer: Dice

To purchase the **WONDERWORD MILLENNIUM SERIES #1 or #2**, order online at: www.WonderWordBooks.com. (Contains 100 puzzles.)

CLASSIFIED ADS

EMPLOYMENT

(1) Office Clerk-$7.05/hr. with 2-years experience. Email JJ Brother Corp. at jjbrothercorp@gmail.com.

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www.guam.wish.org
now also! Saipan Tribune

SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Commercial Cleaner and Maintenance

If interested, bring resume and police clearance to Saipan International School. No telephone calls please.

We are an equal opportunity employer pay no less than the CNMI minimum wage.

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

(1) Maintenance Worker

Five years experience
Salary: $7.05 - 7.25 per hour
Able to trim and maintain flowers. Rake fallen leaves and branches. Sweep and wash walkways. Clean and wash glass windows and do other related chores to help maintain cleanliness and safety of a building rental.

If interested, call Papago Heights Rental at 256-7767

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Operations Manager

• 3-5 years experience; hardworking; must be able to supervise or manage other orders and tracking from other countries; pick up mails from main post office safely. Must have valid driver's license.

Accountant

• Must be college degree with at least 5 years experience in General Accounting. Must be knowledgeable in the preparation of Financial Statements. 5-7 years experience in Peachtree Accounting Systems. Able to work in flexible hours.

Email resume to:
Irmaramba0621@gmail.com
Mail Express Inc.
PMB 719 Box 10005, Saipan, MP 96950

JAR DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

Looking for (1) Mason and (1) Carpenter

5 Years Experience, Skilled Worker with Good Working Character & Personality

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Saipan, MP 96950
Tel.: 285-5354 / 285-4297

QCM, LLC.

Is seeking for the following:
(6) Construction Workers
U.S. only with 5 years experience in multiple trades.
Must have own reliable transportation, no housing, no insurance. Minimum wage.

Send references, police clearance and resume to QCM, LLC. at PMB 3602 Box 10001, Saipan, MP 96950.

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Gualo Rai Court Apartment, Inc.

(1) General Maintenance (Skilled Workers)

Qualification: The applicant must be high school graduate with a minimum of (5) years work experience as general maintenance on heavy duty generator, fire sprinkler system, structural repair of building, installation of drop-ceiling, knowledge of masonry work and plumbing. Salary: $7.15-$8.00/hour

For more information, please call Cecilia Pangelinan at 493-9901

PACIFIC ISLANDS CLUB SAIPAN

We are seeking for high energy individual with a positive, can do attitude. Pacific Islands Club, Saipan is inviting qualified, U.S. workers to apply for the following position:

(1) FOOD SERVER CAPTAIN (KOREAN MARKET)
Minimum of three (6) month work related experience is required. Must be able to speak, read and write in English and Korean. Must be able to work evenings, weekends and holidays.

(1) RESERVATIONS COORDINATOR (KOREAN MARKET)
Minimum of three (3) years' experience working in Front Desk or Reservations for a hotel, preferably in hospitality; Must be able to use Microsoft Excel and hotel reservation system; Must be able to understand, speak, read, write English and Korean language. Must be able to work evenings, weekends, and holidays.

(1) RESERVATIONS MANAGER
Minimum of one (1) year experience working in Room Reservations for a hotel and three (3) years of related managerial experience. Must be proficient with hotel Property Management System (Micros Opera), Microsoft Word, and Microsoft Excel. Has experience with Vision Reports. Must be able to work evenings, weekends, and holidays.

Applications must be received by 5:00pm on Monday, March 12th, 2018.
PIC applications are available at the PIC Security Desk by the Loading Dock/Employee Entrance.
Incomplete applications will NOT be accepted or considered.
PIC is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

JOB VANCANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

D & W ENTERPRISES, INC.
is now accepting application for:

1-ACCOUNTANT
Prepare, examine, and analyze accounting records, profit & loss statements and other financial reports to assess accuracy, completeness, and conformance to reporting and procedural standards. Analyze business operations, trends, costs, revenues, profit & loss statements, and obligations, to project future revenues and expenses. Provide reports to management regarding the finances of the company. Establish tables of accounts, and assign entries to proper accounts. Develop, implement, modify, and document recordkeeping and accounting systems. Reconciles financial discrepancies by collecting and analyzing account information. Secures financial information by completing data base backups. Maintains financial security by following internal controls. Prepares payments to vendors by verifying documentation, and requesting disbursements. Compute taxes owed and prepare/file tax returns, ensuring compliance with payment, reporting and other tax requirements. Must have knowledge in LPGas activity and its safety requirements. Knowledge with various applications such as Microsoft word, excel, and sage 50 accounting system. Must be a bachelor's degree and have at least 2-3-year work experience in the job offered or related field.

1-DIESEL TANK TRUCK DRIVER
Inspect cargo tank motor vehicles to ensure that mechanical, safety, and emergency equipment is in good working order. Conduct a "walk-around" inspection of the cargo tank motor vehicle to check unauthorized alterations, tampering or other suspicious activity. Perform loading of petroleum diesel from supplier's facility to diesel tank truck. Deliver and unload petroleum diesel from tank truck to customer's facility. Secure cone signs and hose before and after unloading fuel to customer. Read gauges or meters, record quantity loaded and unloaded. Obtain receipts or signatures for delivered fuel and collect payment when required. Prepare shipping paper for commerce and should be stored on driver's side for easy access. Ensure shipment matches the shipping paper, placards, markings and labels. Must keep the truck properly maintained and must follow all safety driving regulations. Report vehicle defects, accidents, traffic violations, damage to the vehicles or spills of fuel during loading and unloading. Must have hazmat training and have at least 2-3 year work experience in the job offered or related field. Preferably with driver's license.

Interested individuals please send your resume to D & W Enterprises, Inc., Attn: Mher Lacap, P.O. Box 500440, Saipan, MP 96950 or by email to wushin2@pticom.com.

Wushin Corporation is an equal opportunity employer and has a drug free work environment. Pre-employment drug testing may be required.

JOB VANCANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

WUSHIN CORPORATION
is now accepting application for:

2-ACCOUNTANTS
Analyze financial information and prepare financial reports to determine or maintain records of assets, liabilities, profit and loss, tax liability, or other financial activities within an organization. Must have knowledge in LPGas activity and its safety requirements. Knowledge with various applications such as Microsoft word, excel, and sage 50 accounting system. Must be a bachelor's degree and have at least 2-3-year work experience in the job offered or related field.

1-LPG EQUIPMENT/TANKER MECHANIC
Performs routine maintenance and repairs of LPG tank truck and diesel tank truck including complete valve installation and metering system. Diagnose, maintain and repair tank truck for accuracy of LPG liquid meter and free of leaks. Maintain pneumatic actuator for emergency shut down. Troubleshoot LPG line, hoses, and emergency shutdown remote device. Regular inspections of LPG storage tanks to ensure safety and continuity of gas supply. Perform LPG line installation at customer's facility and assist customer's inquiry. Must have knowledge in LPGas activity and its safety requirements. Must have hazmat training and have at least 2-3 year work experience in the job offered or related field.

1-LPG TANK TRUCK DRIVER
Perform discharging of LPGas from isotainer to facility storage bulk tank. Read the meter and record the level percentage discharged. Perform loading of LPGas from the facility storage tank to the tank truck, read the meter and record quantity loaded. Check the condition of the trucks such as engine oil, water, lights, and tires before leaving the facility. Secure the vehicle when loading from storage tanks to the tank truck and monitor the entire loading and refilling. Prepare invoices for customers to ensure that the quantity will be accurately loaded. Deliver and unload LPGas to customers storage tank. Must have hazmat training and have at least 2-3 year work experience in the job offered or related field.

1-LPG MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN
Repairing and maintenance of LPG storage tanks and cylinders. Perform discharging of LPG from isotainer to storage bulk tank including overseeing the safety and cleanliness of the facility. Read gauges or meters and record quantity discharge. Perform loading of LPG to cylinders for delivery to customer's location. Examines returned cylinders from customers for surface defects such as dents, cracks, and burns. Maintain regular service of cylinders and tanks. Perform LPG equipment installation, replacement, and modification as required. Perform other duties assign by the management. Must have hazmat training and have at least 2-3 year work experience in the job offered or related field.

Interested individuals please send your resume to Wushin Corporation, Attn: Mher Lacap, P.O. Box 500440, Saipan, MP 96950 or by email to wushin2@pticom.com.

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JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Gualo Rai Center, Inc.

(1) General Maintenance (Skilled Workers)
Qualification: The applicant must be high school graduate with a minimum of (5) years work experience as general maintenance on heavy duty generator, fire sprinkler system, structural repair of building, installation of drop-ceiling, knowledge of masonry work and plumbing.
Salary: $7.15-$8.00/hour

(1) Accountant
Qualification: Must be able to keep record of cash receipts, cash disbursements & revenues and prepare monthly and annual financial statements, Balance Sheet, Income Statement, Cash Flows in compliance with relevant US Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), regulations & laws. Prepare local and federal tax returns, withholding taxes, corporate income tax return & ensure timely submission and filing deadline are met and support other taxation issues. Prepare local & federal tax returns, and other financial management reports as required.
Salary: $11.00-$13.00/hour

For more information, please call Alfred Pangelinan at 234-6552

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Meridian Land Surveying, LLC

(2) Chief Land Surveyor
Qualification: the applicant must have at least Bachelor of Science degree in land surveying or civil engineering from an accredited college or university and must have at least (5) years of progressive experience in boundary, as-built, hydrographic and construction surveys in the CNMI or abroad. The applicant much have knowledge in operating all types of survey equipment such as Total Station, GPS instrument, Digital Level, Surveying Software and AutoCadd. In addition, the applicant must be able to compute traverse closures and apply adjustment. Coordinates and manages subprofessional staff in directing daily project assignments.
Salary: $10.00-$12.00/hour

(3) AutoCadd Technician
Qualification: the applicant must have at least a Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering or Land Surveying from an accredited college or university and must have at least (5) years of progressive experience in AutoCadd mapping. The applicant is required to have good knowledge and experience in civil and survey softwares. A sample computer of computer drawing is required.
Salary: $8.00-$9.00/hour

For more information, please call Alfred Pangelinan at 234-6552

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Real Madrid beats Neymar-less PSG

AP
Real Madrid's Karim Benzema, right, shots the ball as PSG's Marco Verratti, center, tries to stop him and his teammate Yuri Berchiche looks on during the round of 16, 2nd leg Champions League soccer match between Paris Saint-Germain and Real Madrid at the Parc des Princes Stadium in Paris, Tuesday, March 6, 2018.

PARIS (AP)—Paris Saint-Germain's dream of joining Europe's elite with a Champions League trophy will have to wait another season, as Real Madrid delivered a brutal reality check by cruising through to the quarterfinals with a 2-1 win on Tuesday night.

Cristiano Ronaldo's powerful header—his 12th goal of the competition—and a deflected effort from midfielder Casemiro either side of a close-range finish from PSG's Edinson Cavani sent Madrid through 5-2 on aggregate.

Peaking at the right time, Madrid can be confident of challenging for a third straight title and 13th overall.

PSG still has not reached the semifinals since its lone appearance in 1995. PSG's ambitious club motto of "Dream Bigger" should perhaps now be revised. On this evidence, and last season's humiliation at the hands of Barcelona, PSG remains a club more hopeful than convincing. Despite huge investment from cash-rich Qatari owners QSI since 2011, PSG has not been past the quarterfinals in that time.

"We needed our heads and our hearts today. But we didn't have both, we didn't play as well as Real Madrid," dejected PSG coach Unai Emery said. "Madrid deserved to go through. I think they controlled 60 percent of the game and we didn't do enough with the 40 percent we had. Losing to Real Madrid itself isn't a disappointment, but being knocked out in the last 16 is."

Trailing 3-1 from the first leg, PSG's fragile defense crumbled and its attack offered little threat without the injured Neymar. The biggest bang from this PSG side was from the fireworks constantly let off by a section of fans behind one goal.

Cavani's goal gave PSG some hope with 20 minutes left. But with midfielder Marco Verratti already sent off, scoring two more to force extra time was beyond a lackluster PSG side.

Instead, midfielder Casemiro's deflected shot looped past stranded goalkeeper Alphonse Areola in the 80th. He was gifted the ball after midfielder Adrien Rabiot dealt poorly with Lucas Vazquez's cross.

To compound a miserable night for PSG fans, who so badly want to believe this side can conquer Europe, Verratti showed terrible composure to in getting sent off midway through the second half. He got a second yellow card, having protested vehemently with referee Felix Brych after not getting a free kick.

"Our fans got behind us, I apologize to them," Rabiot said. "We tried but we couldn't do it."

Ronaldo had already done his usual damage.

The Champions League's all-time leading scorer was given far too much space and leapt triumphantly to beat Areola with a downward header in the 51st minute. He had netted twice in the first leg.

Ronaldo is hitting top form at a crucial time and has scored in nine Champions League games in a row, matching Ruud van Nistelrooy's record.

This was a huge test for a PSG side desperate to prove it belongs among Europe's elite, especially after spectacularly failing last year—becoming the first team eliminated after winning the first leg 4-0. Barcelona won the return 6-1.

"Maybe tonight they weren't so good, but it's also because we played very well," Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane said. "Obviously it became harder for them when we scored the second goal."

In the night's other match, five-time champion Liverpool eased into the last eight, drawing 0-0 at home to two-time winner Porto after winning the away leg 5-0.

The atmosphere was electric at Parc des Princes in Paris, with thick smoke engulfing the stadium a pre-match pyrotechnics were set off. PSG's exuberant fans were asked to "stop letting off flares" over the stadium loud speaker just after the interval.

This was all part of a concerted effort to motivate the players. The club's communications department had released a video, urging fans to rally behind the team seemingly as a matter of urgency for the city itself. Neymar also posted a video on Twitter, with the words "Vous allez le Faire" (You will do it).

Banners around the ground encouraged the team and some fans had already taken matters into their own hands. Late into the night before the game, a small group of PSG Ultras let off bangers, chanted "Paris" and banged a drum outside the Real Madrid team hotel.

But all this bluster seemed more like bluff.

After a fairly even first half, Ronaldo headed wide early in the second half—a warning sign.

No franchise tag for Cousins, set to hit free agency

WASHINGTON (AP)—Kirk Cousins' time with the Washington Redskins is about to end after they chose not to use the franchise tag on the quarterback as expected.

The Redskins have agreed to acquire Alex Smith from the Kansas City Chiefs, effectively pushing Cousins into free agency following a tumultuous six years with the club the drafted him. Cousins will be the top free agent available when the league year opens in mid-March and should have no shortage of suitors.

"Next week is now officially the first time since 2007 that I'll be choosing where to play football," Cousins posted on Twitter. "I'm open to suggestions."

The 29-year-old Cousins is coming off his third consecutive 4,000-yard passing season. In his time as a full-time NFL starter, he has completed 67 percent of his passes for 81 touchdowns, 36 interceptions and a 97.5 QB rating.

Despite previously saying Washington could win with Cousins, coach Jay Gruden said at the scouting combine that "it's time for us to move on" and find some continuity at the position.

The Redskins now seemingly have that in Smith, who will join the Redskins once the trade becomes official March 14 and has agreed to a four-year extension with $71 million guaranteed.

Cousins could easily command more than that on the open market with the New York Jets, Denver Broncos, Minnesota Vikings, Arizona Cardinals and Cleveland Browns among the teams interested in upgrading at quarterback.

After becoming the first QB in NFL history to play two consecutive seasons on the franchise tag—making almost $44 million in the process—Cousins is looking for long-term stability in the wake of almost-weekly questions about his future in Washington persisted over the past few years. Agent Mike McCartney declined to comment on the plans of the Cousins camp in an email to The Associated Press on Tuesday.

This is perhaps the first time in Cousins' football career that he has been No. 1 on any list. He did not have any scholarship offers as a high school senior, was not considered a top prospect after four years at Michigan State and got picked in the fourth round in 2012 by the Redskins—the same draft they traded up to make Robert Griffin III the No. 2 pick.

Only 39-year-old Drew Brees, who's expected to re-sign with the New Orleans Saints, threw for more yards last season than Cousins, who is the best option available in a crop that includes Case Keenum, Sam Bradford and Josh McCown. Though during the 2017 season it was reported that Cousins could set a record for QB contracts, it's unclear how close he might come to the $135 million, five-year deal with $92 million guaranteed that Matthew Stafford signed with the Detroit Lions.

In Pittsburgh, Le'Veon Bell keeps saying he wants to stay with the Steelers. The Steelers keep saying they want to keep one of the NFL's best running backs in the fold for years to come.

They have until July 16 to make it happen.

The Steelers placed the exclusive rights franchise tag on the two-time All-Pro for a second straight spring on Tuesday, putting Bell's long-term status with the club up in the air.

Bell, a two-time All Pro, accounted for 1,946 total yards and 11 touchdowns for the AFC North champions in 2017. Both Bell and Steelers management said after the season they hoped to get a contract extension done quickly, but failed to do so by Tuesday's deadline for teams to use the franchise tag.

Bell is scheduled to make $14.54 million in 2018 if he signs the franchise tender and the two sides are unable to reach an agreement on a new deal. He skipped offseason workouts and training camp last summer before signing the tender on the eve of the regular season.

In Jacksonville, if Allen Robinson remains with the Jaguars, it won't be as one of the highest-paid receivers in the league.

The Jaguars declined to use the franchise or transition tag on Robinson, stirring questions about his future. NFL teams had until Tuesday afternoon to tag pending free agents, but Jacksonville executives told Robinson long before the deadline he would not be tagged.

Had the Jags tagged Robinson, he could have signed a one-year, $15.982 million contract for 2018. Not doing so indicates how top executive Tom Coughlin and general manager Dave Caldwell feel about Robinson; they don't believe he is worth that much money six months after reconstructive knee surgery.

Rockets top Thunder for 16th straight victory

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—Chris Paul scored 25 points and the Houston Rockets beat the Oklahoma City Thunder 122-112 on Tuesday night for their 16th straight win.

James Harden had 23 points and 11 assists, and Trevor Ariza added 15 points for the Rockets, who are on the second-longest win streak in franchise history.

Russell Westbrook scored 32 points and Carmelo Anthony added 23 for Oklahoma City, which is in a logjam of teams trying to fight their way into third place in the West.

Oklahoma City had beaten several of the league's top teams this season. The Thunder have two wins over Golden State, a victory over Toronto and a win over Cleveland this season. The Rockets avoided that fate by going 17 of 33 on 3-pointers and 29 of 34 on free throws.

The Rockets led 54-45 at halftime as Harden posted 13 points, seven assists and five rebounds. Anthony had 19 points for the Thunder and Westbrook had 14, but All-Star Paul George went 1 for 7 from the field before the break.

The Thunder closed the gap to three in the opening minutes of the third quarter, but the Rockets dominated the rest of the way and led 87-74 at the end of the period. Houston made 7 of 10 3-pointers in the quarter.

AP

Oklahoma City Thunder center Steven Adams, left, reaches in to knock the ball away from Houston Rockets guard Chris Paul, right, in the first half of an NBA basketball game in Oklahoma City, Tuesday, March 6, 2018.

Wizards 117, Heats 113 OT

In Washington, Bradley Beal scored 30 points on 12-of-16 shooting and Washington had its best 3-point shooting night of the season to beat Miami.

Beal went 6 of 7 from beyond the arc, leading a Washington team that finished 14 for 24 there while snapping its first three-game losing streak of the season.

Tomas Satoransky added 19 points and Markieff Morris had 16 points and 13 rebounds. Morris' baseline 3-pointer off Beal's feed made it 113-109 with 1:06 left in overtime.

The fifth-place Wizards improved to 11-6 in their extended stretch without All-Star point guard John Wall as he recovers from knee surgery. They moved within a half-game of Indiana and maintained a one-game lead on Philadelphia in the Eastern Conference.

Dwyane Wade scored 22 points but missed on a potential game-tying jumper with 4.1 seconds left in overtime for Miami.

Raptors 106, Hawks 90

In Toronto, DeMar DeRozan scored 25 points, Jonas Valanciunas had 15 and Toronto beat Atlanta for its fifth straight win.

C.J. Miles added 14 points, and Delon Wright and Serge Ibaka each had 10 as the Eastern Conference leaders won for the 12th time in 13 games and completed their first season sweep of the Hawks since 2001-02.

The Raptors are 27-5 at home, the best record in the NBA. Toronto, which trailed by one to begin the fourth quarter, improved to 4-16 when behind through three.

Toronto outscored Atlanta 30-13 in the fourth. The Hawks shot 6 for 18 in the quarter and committed eight turnovers.

76ers 128, Hornets 114

In Charlotte, Robert Covington scored 22 points, Ben Simmons flirted with a triple-double and Philadelphia handed Charlotte its fourth straight loss.

Simmons had 16 points, 13 assists and eight rebounds as the 76ers won for the third time in the last four games.

Dario Saric scored 19 points, Joel Embiid added 18 and JJ Redick chipped in with 14 as seven 76ers finished in double digits in what might have been the final blow to the Hornets' playoff hopes.

While the 76ers shot 57.5 percent from field—including 16 of 33 from 3-point range— Charlotte's All-Star point guard Kemba Walker couldn't find the bottom of the net. Walker was limited to a season-low five points on 1-of-9 shooting.

Dwight Howard had a season-high 30 points and grabbed six rebounds, while Nic Batum had 12 points and 10 assists for Charlotte, which fell seven games out of the final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference with 17 games remaining.

Mavericks 118, Nuggets 107

In Dallas, Yogi Ferrell rode hot 3-point shooting to a season-high 24 points, Dirk Nowitzki also was strong from long range to score 17 and Dallas beat Denver.

Ferrell and Nowitzki both made their first five 3s, and Ferrell finished 9 of 11 from the field to help one of the NBA's worst teams hand the Nuggets a loss they didn't need in the tight Western Conference playoff race.

A second-year guard who came to Dallas on a 10-day contract last season, Ferrell finished 6 of 7 from long range. The 39-year-old Nowitzki, in his 20th season, all with the Mavericks, was 5 of 7.

Rookie Dennis Smith Jr. had 18 points and a career-high 11 assists as the Mavericks won for just the second time in nine games.

Wilson Chandler scored 21 points for the Nuggets, who couldn't follow up a win at Cleveland with a chance to sweep a three-game road trip.

Houston extended its lead to 19 midway through the fourth quarter.

Pelicans 121, Clippers 116

In Los Angeles, getting hit in the ribs only took Anthony Davis off the court for a short time. He came back and proved a one-man wrecking crew against the Los Angeles Clippers.

Davis scored 41 points despite a rib contusion and the New Orleans Pelicans won their ninth straight, 121-116 on Tuesday night.

He tied his career high with four 3-pointers and had 13 rebounds.

"My team's doing a good job getting me open and putting me in a spot to be successful," Davis said. "Everybody on the team is playing well."

Warriors 114, Nets 101

In Oakland, with the start of the playoffs just more than a month away, the defending champions are still trying to find consistency for 48 minutes.

Nobody is overly concerned. Not yet. Not with this superstar roster capable of scoring in bunches even after the mind-boggling stretches on both ends that are far from pretty.

Stephen Curry scored 34 points with six 3-pointers, and the Golden State Warriors won their sixth straight since the All-Star break by beating the Brooklyn Nets 114-101 on Tuesday night.

"Right now you can pretty much smell the playoffs coming," Curry said. "I think we understand that we are a talented team and we have championship pedigree. We understand what it takes to win a championship but you can't just turn on the switch of every single detail that needs to go into being the team we want to be come April."

Trail Blazers 111, Knicks 87

In Portland, Knicks coach Jeff Hornacek said it may be time to get Damian Lillard into the Most Valuable Player conversation.

"The guy is playing fantastic. He might be one of those guys you've got to start talking about that MVP too with the way he's playing," New York's coach said after Lillard scored 37 points in a 111-87 victory over the Knicks on Tuesday night.

Lillard made eight 3-pointers, one off his career high, in the Blazers' eighth straight win.

Spieth trying to catch up before Masters

PALM HARBOR, Fla. (AP)—Jordan Spieth feels as though he has been playing catch-up all year.

Spieth had a memorable offseason when he proposed (successfully) to longtime girlfriend Annie Verret. What suffered were his preparations for a new year after a bout with mononucleosis. He lost weight. More importantly, he lost time.

That's one reason he was on the fence about his schedule leading up to the Masters. Spieth didn't firmly decide to play in the Mexico Championship until the last minute, and that briefly made him rethink whether to play the Valspar Championship, which he won three years ago.

Ultimately, he did both.

"I was trying to figure out what was the best strategy to be as rested and prepared for Augusta," Spieth said. "I just wasn't sure. I haven't had a whole lot of rest."

His December can be understated, much like the time it took Dustin Johnson to fully recover from his back injury before the Masters last year.

Spieth is playing his sixth tournament of the year at the Valspar Championship, but part of him feels like it's January. All because of December, when he said he had only four one-hour practice sessions.

"I probably lost a full month, month-and-a-half out of it," Spieth said. "The problem was in that time coming back, the basic stuff after you take a couple of weeks off ... is the time you figure out all the basics: the ball position, the alignment issues. And then I was starting to have those problems, especially in the short game, while I was having to play tournaments. And so it adds to that frustration level."

It hasn't been a total flop. Spieth has had only two rounds over par, in the opening round of Kapalua and Phoenix. While he missed the cut in Phoenix, his worst other finish was a tie for 20th at Pebble Beach.

"I feel like right now my game is in the shape it would be after playing a couple of events," he said in Mexico. "The progression of that last three-week stretch (Phoenix, Pebble, Riviera) is the progression I normally experience the first few weeks of the year."

After the Valspar Championship, he is off next week before Match Play, the Houston Open and the Masters.

Darvish throws two hitless innings in spring training debut

MESA, Ariz. (AP)—If Yu Darvish was tipping his pitches in the World Series last year, he seems to have fixed it.

Darvish threw two hitless innings in his spring training debut for the Chicago Cubs, facing his former teammates on the Los Angeles Dodgers.

When last on the mound, Darvish was chased by Houston after getting just five outs in both Games 3 and 7 of the World Series. Darvish said he was moved to lose 15 pounds "because of what happened in the World Series."

Darvish was concerned about the possible impact of the weight loss on his velocity but those worries seemed unwarranted Tuesday.

"It was right up there," he said of his velocity, speaking through a translator. "Glad it's 95."

There was speculation that the Astros had figured out what sort of pitches Darvish was about to throw.

"They could simply be a good, strong team," Darvish said, adding he has considered "various things to keep consistency and mix up pitches and throw from the same slot."

Darvish struck out four, including Corey Seager, Matt Kemp and Yasiel Puig in the opening inning. The Japanese star allowed one run when Chris Taylor walked leading off the game and circled the bases on a pair of wild pitches around a stolen base.

Signed to a $126 million, six-year deal, Darvish says he's enjoying wearing the new uniform.

"Everybody is happy here," he said. "I certainly feel comfortable being a Cub."

Darvish also has warm feelings toward the Dodgers.

"Every one of them is great. I don't want to hit any batters. I have that in mind," he said

He joked with Dodgers manager Dave Roberts, saying he would beat the Dodgers.

"I only said I'm going to beat them in spring training," Darvish said. "After the first three batters, I think I was able to command my fastball, slider and curve really well," he said.

Darvish is coming off a World Series in which he twice was hit hard by the champion Houston Astros, including a rough outing in Game 7 at Dodger Stadium.

Chicago's Ben Zobrist says Darvish "adds fear" to opposing batting orders because of his different pitches.

"It's like, `Oh, we have to deal with Darvish? We just dealt with (Jon) Lester and (Kyle) Hendricks.' He can take a hitter who thinks he's hot and make him not very quickly."

Third baseman Kris Bryant is happy he doesn't have to face him anymore.

"He throws hard, so you obviously have to stay on the fastball," Bryant said. "But his breaking stuff is really sharp. It's definitely not a comfortable at-bat."

AP

Chicago Cubs pitcher Yu Darvish warms up during the first inning of a spring training baseball game against the Los Angeles Dodgers, Tuesday, March 6, 2018, in Mesa, Ariz.

Lincecum to wear 44 in honor of late brother

Meanwhile, after wearing No. 55 for his entire major league career, Tim Lincecum will switch to 44 with the Texas Rangers in honor of his late older brother.

Sean Lincecum's funeral was Saturday, which delayed Tim Lincecum from taking the physical needed to finalize his $1 million, one-year contract with the Texas Rangers. The two-time Cy Young Award winner passed the physical Tuesday and said he will wear the number his brother used as an amateur.

"I always looked up to my brother," Lincecum said. "He was an idol for me. He just had a lot of bad runs with the choices he made in life."

Texas general manager Jon Daniels said the 33-year-old right-hander will be a reliever and could be the Rangers' closer as he attempts to pitch in the big leagues for the first time since 2016.

"I think it's a great opportunity," Lincecum said. "It was a difficult decision with the Dodgers and the Rangers, but it came down to those two teams. I thought the Rangers would be a better fit. The conversations that we had just made me feel a little bit more warm and fuzzy inside."

MCS 1

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from advancing to the finals when it withstood Mt. Carmel's late rally in the first set. The Knights were down, 12-17, when they tied the match at 17-all, forcing GCA 1 coach Genesis Prieto to call a timeout. When the game resumed, the Eagles regained their bearings and scored 8 unanswered points with the last one off Mt. Carmel's error (three touches).

The Eagles also posted the first point in the second set, but the Knights countered with a 13-2 run to take control of that period. Merrick Toves scored on a couple of shots near the net, while Diaz had some aces, and the other Mt. Carmel points came off GCA 1's errors. In that meltdown, Prieto was pressed to burn all his two time outs to stop the bleeding.

After the second timeout, GCA 1 managed to earn 3 straight points, however, the Knights won the next exchanges, including the last 4-1 scoring surge capped by Toves' tip to send the exciting semis match to a deciding third set.

Mt. Carmel then rode on its momentum in the second-set victory to win the third and complete the come-from-behind victory. While Toves and Diaz teamed up for the Knights in the second set, it was Richard Steele who gave Mt. Carmel the needed lift in the third.

Steele had three straight aces, giving Mt. Carmel a 4-0 lead. The Knights got their first point off Toves' kill and with Mt. Carmel threatening to break away, Prieto pressed the panic button early.

However, the brief lull did not break Steele's rhythm as he added three more aces before serving wide on his eighth try, handing GCA 1 its first point in the third set.

Though they managed to snap Mt. Carmel's run, the Eagles failed to get successive points and also committed costly turnovers, including miscommunication on whose going to hit the ball. On three occasions, the leather dropped in front of two GCA 1 players.

The Knights went on to end GCA 1's finals hopes when Steele closed out for Mt. Carmel going for a kill from the left side with the ball heading down the Eagles' front line. Chris Pangelinan stepped forward, rushing out for a return, but his shot went wide out of the sideline, handing Mt. Carmel the first finals berth.

Knights coach Jun Yun lauded his players for their efforts, especially after working harder in the last two sets. In the finals, Yun hopes to see the same determination and aggressiveness from his players, as they will be up against a very tough team in GCA 2.

"We will keep on attacking and play more on the net," Yun said.

It will be a battle of offense in the finals, as GCA coach Caesar Libut also said they are counting on their attackers to get the win and keep their unbeaten record this season. However, Libut cautioned his players not to be overconfident because even though they defeated Mt. Carmel twice and have yet to drop a single game in the competition, you can never tell what will going to happen in the finals.

"We will play for every point, whether we are leading by a big margin or not," Libut said.

SAIPAN

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conference by MVA marketing manager Broc Calvo, MVA Community Projects manager Martin Duenas, and race director Ed Diaz.

Concepcion attributed the surge in the number of participants in Saipan Marathon to MVA's longer promotion of the event and cooperation of its marketing partners off-island. MVA worked on the promotion of Saipan Marathon for six months and also launched an online registration for the first time, making it easier for international runners to sign up for this weekend's race.

China has the most runners entered in Saipan Marathon with 205, while 150 and 127 are coming from Korea and Japan. Nearly 500 will compete in the 10K run, 231 in the half marathon, over 100 in full marathon, and 30 in the ultra marathon (50K).

Cash prizes amounting to more than $22,000 will be given away to top finishers in the various races, while participants, who are not that competitive, maystill go home with prizes courtesy of All-Star Sports Goods and The Athletes' Foot—the sponsor of the first-ever "wackiest contest" in Saipan Marathon.

The contest will award prizes to winners in the following categories: Best Costume (male and female), Craziest Hair, Most Awesome Shoes, Shortest Shorts (male and female), and Ugliest Running Shoes.

"Have fun, dress up, and be colorful during the race day," Calvo said.

"Cheer the runners so they will enjoy the race and Saipan and come back," Duenas said.

Meanwhile, Diaz is reminding motorists and pedestrians to take extra caution this Saturday, as hundred of runners will be on the road, especially between 6am to 7pm from Micro Beach to Beach Road, as 6am is the go time for 10K participants.

KFAS

From Page 28

Sun Palace broke the game wide open in the second half to make it to the win column after a draw with Matansa during the league's opening week.

Daniel Mar Pablo powered Sun Palace to the lopsided win after scoring four goals. He had two of Sun Palace's five goals in the second half. Jack Phan chipped in two, while Hugo Kan tallied the other one. Sun Palace got an own goal off PIC's booboo.

PIC's lone goal came from Albert Bergancia.

Matansa 8, Shirley's 1

Matansa duplicated Sun Palace's easy victory after dominating Shirley's in the second game at the KES pitch.

Kamrul Kamrul and Amzad Khan registered two goals apiece in Matansa's first win of the season, while Gabriel Arkoh, Daniel Day Duenas, Jacob Montes, and Rassel Fnu recorded one each. Shirley's averted a shutout loss, thanks to Jerry Tan's goal in the second half.

DIVISION A
MP United 5, Paire 1

MP United took the lead in the division following a win over Paire in the curtain-raiser at the Hopwood Middle School Field.

MP United (2-0-0) is ahead of TanHoldings (1-1-0), Paire (1-01), Winners & Pacific Eco (0-1-0), Okadaya (0-1-1), Teen Ayuyus (0-1-1), and Kanoa (0-0-1).

Sunjoon Tenorio lifted MP United to its second victory in as many games after delivering a hat trick, while the club's two other goals were courtesy of Anthony Fruit and Skyler Poon.

Jonathan Takano scored the only goal for Paire.

Winners & Pacific Eco. 2, Teen Ayuyus 2

The Teens Ayuyus spoiled Winners & Pacific Eco.'s debut in the league after forcing a draw in the last match at the Hopwood pitch.

Rintaro Miyawaki drilled the pair of goals for the Teen Ayuyus' with his last in the 83rd minute tying the match. His first goal was recorded in the 43rd minute.

Junsik Kim and Ensik Choi scored for Winners & Pacific Eco. in the 53rd and 34th minute, respectively.

Meanwhile, the second game in the division had TanHoldings and Okadaya settling for a scoreless draw.

Boys U15 vs University Network for Global Leadership

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Players and coaches of the CNMI Boys U15 National Team training pool and the Japan-based University Network for Global Leadership pose for a photo after their friendly game last week at the Hopwood Middle School Field.

A member of the CNMI Boys U15 National Team training pool, right, keeps a close eye on a University Network for Global Leadership player.

The CNMI Boys U15 National Team training pool's Floyd Muna rights, runs ahead of a University Network for Global Leadership player as they chase the ball.

University Network for Global Leadership and CNMI Boys U15 National Team training pool players battle for possession.

A University Network for Global Leadership player leaps for a header.

University Network for Global Leadership and CNMI Boys U15 National Team training pool players collide.

CNMI Boys U15 National Team training pool players huddle before the start of the friendly match.

University Network for Global Leadership and CNMI Boys U15 National Team training pool players exchange high-fives after their friendly match.

Real Madrid beats Neymar-less PSG

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Saipan Marathon draws record entry

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A new record has been established in Saipan Marathon as 914 runners have already signed up for the 2018 edition of Marianas Visitors Authority's signature event.

MVA manager director Chris Concepcion disclosed the record number of entries in the 2018 Saipan Marathon during the race's press conference yesterday at the MVA office in San Jose. The number surpassed the 804 posted during the 2012 race and the turnout for this Saturday's event is expected to increase as runners have until this afternoon (5pm) to register.

"We are happy to announce that the 2018 Saipan Marathon will be a record year. We have 914 runners from Japan, Korea, China, Taiwan, Guam, and the CNMI," said Concepcion, who was joined in the press

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Marianas Visitors Authority officials and supporters of the 2018 Saipan Marathon pose for a group photo after the press conference for this Saturday's event at the MVA office in San Jose yesterday.

MCS 1 vs GCA 2 in finals

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
The CNMI U16 Women's National Team's Mikky Vargas, right, dribbles away from a Korean Football Association on Saipan defender during their Division B game in the 2018 Spring M-League last Sunday at the Koblerville Elementary School Field.

KFAS earns solo lead in Division B

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Korean Football Association on Saipan made it two in a row after outclassing the CNMI Women's U16 National Team, 4-2, during their Division B game in the 2018 Spring M-League last Sunday at the Koblerville Elementary School Field.

With its 2-0-0 win-loss-draw record, KFAS sits alone at the top of the team standings early this season leading Matansa (1-1-0), Sun Palace (1-1-0), Pacific Islands Club (0-1-1), U16 WNT (0-1-1), and Shirley's Football Club (0-0-2).

Juan Oh knocked in a pair of goals for KFAS in the first half with his first recorded in the 29th minute and the second two minutes later to hand their team a 3-0 halftime lead. Hwapyoung Kim posted KFAS' other goal in the first half when he hit the board in the 38th minute, while Edwin Kim closed out for the squad in the 53rd.

Mikky Vargas and Mae Ito nailed the two goals for the U16 WNT in the second half with the former finding her target in the 46th minute and the latter in the 54th.

Sun Palace 8, PIC 1

In the first game, Sun Palace eased past PIC.

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By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Mt. Carmel School 1 played a spoiler role, preventing an all-Grace Christian Academy finals in the middle school division of the 2017-2018 Commonwealth Coalition of Private Schools Association Volleyball League after eking out a three-set win over GCA 1 in their semis game yesterday at the Eagles court in Navy Hill.

The Knights battled back from an opening set loss, 17-25, prevailing in the last two, 25-13, 15-4, to clinch the first finals berth and foil GCA's bid for a family affair in tomorrow's championship game. The Eagles, though, will still have a shot at the division title, as GCA 2 took the second finals seat after dominating Agape Christian School, 25-12, 25-7, in the other Final Four pairing.

GCA 1 moved one set away

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Mt. Carmel School 1's Merrick Toves leaps for a tip during the third set of their semis game against Grace Christian Academy 1 in the middle school division of the 2017-2018 Commonwealth Coalition of Private Schools Association Volleyball League yesterday at the Eagles court in Navy Hill.